Encounter the Rugged Outback of the Mogollon Rim

arizonahighways.com JUNE 2003

Arizona Highways

colorado river escapades

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS
JUNE 2003

[THIS PAGE] For more than 10 years, Wade Sherbrooke, director of the Southwestern Research Station at Portal, has welcomed the summer solstice by "kissing" hummingbirds. Knowing that the tiny birds are attracted to red objects, Sherbrooke applies bright lipstick, fills his mouth with sugar water and waits patiently — sometimes as long as an hour — for a feathered taker of his proffered nectar. SHERRIE BUZBY
[FRONT COVER] Rafters survey the Colorado River as it flows through the inner gorge of the Grand Canyon below Nankoweap. See story, page 6. KERRICK JAMES
[BACK COVER] A spray of golden crownbeard flowers decorates a weathered log in Coconino National Forest. JEFF SNYDER


page 46

POINTS OF INTEREST FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

letters and e-mail

Dirty Pictures

Please see that your magazine stops using immodest pictures such as the one of a sculpture of a woman on page 5 of your January 2003 issue. We cannot subscribe to a dirty magazine!

CAROL BROMLEY, The Piedmont, NC

We take great pride in publishing a wholesome magazine, one the entire family can read. I'm sorry you found this statue offensive. We will be even more careful in our editing.

December Issue Error

I have subscribed to *Arizona Highways* for more than 30 years, and I believe the December 2002 portfolio ("A Land for All") is the best ever. I have traveled extensively in Arizona and have camped in all states of the United States. The likenesses (of scenes in Arizona with those in other states) are remarkable.

There is only one discrepancy. In New Hampshire the mountains are the White Mountains, not the Green Mountains.

BARBARA C. WALLING, Bloomfield, VT

The poor old editor apologizes for the misidentification. I think we heard about the error from just about every resident of New Hampshire.

Leaping Lizards

Vera Marie Badertscher's article on the Gila monster was most interesting ("Beauty or Beast?" January '03). Unfortunately, it left me in dread of her understatement of this animal. My wife and I spent a week in Tucson at a timeshare. One morning my wife said, "Look at this beautiful lizard outside our room."

I said, "Leave it alone; it is dangerous." When we got closer it leaped at us. We reported it to the timeshare office, and they sent someone to take it away. The man had a looped stick, and it leaped furiously at him, too. Although, as Badertscher says, few die from its bite, I am sure that anyone with a heart problem, or an innocent child, could have a nasty bout with this animal.

Otherwise, I love your magazine, and I have been a subscriber for many years. The article telling where to go in Tucson was much appreciated.

SAM JACOBS, Prescott

Wow, what an experience. The poor old editor has seen a number of Gila monsters in the wild and not once did they pounce. All they did was wobble away.

Code Talkers

I first saw copies of your magazine as a young sergeant in the Marine Corps in the South Pacific during World War II. Several "Navajo talkers," as they were known, were assigned to my outfit. I became fascinated by their almost hypnotic trance as they would spend hours gazing at the beautiful landscape photos of their homeland. It was as though each man would place himself in the scene. I thought you'd be interested in knowing the true value of your marvelous magazine as it played such a significant role for those men.

EMMET WILLARD, Stephens City, VA

Great Writing

Charles Bowden's "An Insistent Silence, Stillness and Space" (January 2003) is absolute poetry. Mr. Bowden's soulful descriptions and personal awareness of the Cabeza Prieta explain why I, too, "will never really leave the place . . . ." His writing style tugs at my heart, urging me to return to that special part of Arizona as soon as possible. Willard Clay's scenic two-page photo of the Tule Desert takes my breath away!

TARA ALLEN, Albuquerque, NM

I've been reading your magazine and enjoying it for years. The most enjoyable article, by far, was the one by Charles Bowden on the Cabeza Prieta.

Please also compliment Mr. Clay on his superb photography. I particularly liked the photo in the center of the magazine. It is beautiful. It is so clear that you can see pebbles on the ground from as far away as 30 or 40 feet about as clearly as those directly in front of the camera lens. It is so realistic that when I first look at it my impression is to watch my step so I don't bump into a cholla. It is going on the wall next to my desk.

KEN EIME, Aurora, CO

Charles Bowden's wonderful presentation of Cabeza Prieta is the best-written article I've ever read in your magazine. As a writer myself, I stand in awe of someone who can so skillfully convey the spirit of a place to those who may never have the chance to visit it themselves. Please send us more from this very talented author.

DEANNA SWANEY, Wasilla, AK

Mr. Bowden is an author of national standing who has written many times for this magazine and will continue to do so.

Petroglyph Location

In your January 2003 issue of *Arizona Highways*, the petroglyphs pictured on page 3 are located in Saguaro National Park West at Signal Hill Picnic area and not Picture Rocks Retreat, though there are petroglyphs at the retreat, also.

JANE WILLIAMS, Tucson

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

JUNE 2003 VOL. 79, NO. 6

Arizona Highways® (ISSN 0004-1521) is published monthly by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Subscription price: $24 a year in the U.S., $34 in Canada, $37 elsewhere outside the U.S. Single copy: $3.99 U.S. Send subscription correspondence and change of address information to *Arizona Highways*, 2039 W. Lewis Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85009. Periodical postage paid at Phoenix, AZ and at additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to *Arizona Highways*, 2039 W. Lewis Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85009.

PRODUCED IN THE USA

taking the off-ramp

Arizona oddities, attractions and pleasures

CASTLE DOME MINES MUSEUM

Castle Dome Mines Museum Keeps the Dreams Alive

Out in the austere southwest corner of Arizona, a small road sign along U.S. Route 95 about 40 miles north of Yuma points toward the Castle Dome Mines Museum. Once you arrive there, you'll find a most intriguing "museum." Owners Allen and Stephanie Armstrong have assembled an outdoor display of buildings, a rock shop and a ghost town from what they've found out in the Castle Dome Mining District, a thriving silver-producing area in the late 19th century. "We saw an opportunity to save the history," says Stephanie, who enthusiastically meets and greets each visitor.

Among the assorted cabins and other wooden buildings are the Miner's Diner; the Diggers Room, with old threadbare miners' clothes on display; Adam's Cabin, the last original cabin of the district; even a fully functional outhouse from the former Linda Mine. Around and in the buildings stand assorted mining artifacts — tools, buckets, blasting-powder boxes, pieces of a headframe, a full-sized well digger — and historical photographs, newspaper articles and personal histories. Allen leads tours of the mining district on Wednesdays at 10 A.M., but the museum is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M.; winter is prime season. Admission fee. Information: (928) 920-3062.

A House Made of Stone

The Bonelli House, a two-story Territorial-style structure in downtown Kingman, is a historic minimansion. Built in 1915, the house sports a veranda on three sides and, atop its roof, a square cupola that looks like a small house.

With the exception of one room, all of the house's furnishings are original — many antiques and family heirlooms. Swiss-born George Bonelli and his wife, Effie, settled in Utah, then moved to Arizona to raise their nine children. The family operated ranches, a salt mine and a ferry across the Colorado River.

Their original home, at the same location, was destroyed by fire. Because the Bonellis were determined not to have that happen again, they constructed their four-bedroom mansion of locally quarried tufu stone.

MOHAVE MUSEUM

The Bonelli House, circa 1915.

The big white house, now owned by the City of Kingman, stands at the corner of Fifth and Spring streets, surrounded by a white picket fence. Tours are available. Information: (928) 753-3195.

Arizona's Green Giants Break Records

Arizona ranks third in the nation for arboreal giants on the National Register of Big Trees, just behind Florida and California, according to the nonprofit conservation organization American Forests, which sponsors the register.

With more than 70 champs listed, Arizona sweeps the register's list of six saguaros — the tallest, at 50 feet, grows in Maricopa County. Two other cactus species on the register qualify as "trees" — the jumping cholla and Indian fig — the national champions of which live in southern Arizona. Of the three paloverde trees listed, only one can be found within the state's borders. The winning 28-foot yellow paloverde — Arizona's state tree — lives peacefully in Tucson's Tohono Chul Park.

DAVID H. SMITH

The champs aren't limited to desert terrain — they can be found in mountain woodlands, riparian areas and urban environments. The green giants thrive in southern Arizona, including a tree on the national register growing on the grounds of the University of Arizona in Tucson — a 41-foot tenaza.

The granddaddy of Arizona's giant trees is a Fremont cottonwood thriving along a stream in Santa Cruz County. The sprawling 92-foot specimen is the largest reported cottonwood in the world. Now that's a tall tale.

THIS MONTH IN ARIZONA

1891
Arizona holds a **constitutional convention in support of statehood**. Congress is **not impressed.**

1892
President Benjamin Harrison proclaims the **480-acre Casa Grande Reservation** to protect and preserve the ruins of **Great House,** the first protected ancient cultural site in the nation.

1895
The editor of *The Phoenix Gazette*, J.O. Dunbar, characterized the governor, attorney general and marshal as **"assassins, looters, hoodoos, patronage peddlers and land grant sharks."** He is tried and convicted of libel in a Tucson court and fined $1,000.

1906
The first **Arizona Bar Association** is established, but quickly dies **due to lack of interest**.

Tucson sees **the last trip of a mule-drawn streetcar** as the first electric car travels to the gates of the University of Arizona.

LINDA LONGMIRE

A Great Date

You may find one of the better dates of your life in a shop off a Tucson side street. The place has the charm of an old roadside stand. Its wooden shelves remain unabashedly empty when the season has yet to provide a crop.

Behind the counter stands Karen Munson, the matchmaker. She'll introduce you to the king, the medjool, the blond dayri and the little halawy. For almost half a century, people have stopped by Munson's Tucson Date Co. Inc. for just such a meeting, a union between humans and the sweet, chewy fruit of date palms.

Information: (520) 887-2731.

Shop Where the Indians Shop

Mingle with Phoenix's original "local" crowd while shopping for craft supplies, books, genuine Indian jewelry and music at Drumbeat Indian Arts.

Sweetgrass, sage and cedar caress your nose. Deerskin, jingles, beads and Indian music CDs share space with Pendleton blankets, books, bolas and barrettes. Local vendors sell frybread about once a week in the parking lot.

Drumbeat's owner, Bob Nuss, regales shoppers with tales of his adventures running one of the nation's premier Indian art and craft supply stores.

Nuss recalls when a woman ordered his entire stock of a certain seed bead. "Are you sure you want them all?" he asked. "Yes, I need them all," she insisted. So he shipped his entire stock — about 100,000 beads.

"About a week later, she called me back. 'I don't need that many beads,' she said," chuckled Nuss.

Information: (602) 266-4823.

Don't Disrespect the Mockingbird

A word to the wise: Don't disrespect the mockingbird just because it sings so purrty. In fact, the mockingbird's song helps it thrive even in desert riparian areas where competition for living space is fierce. Turns out, the trilling sound of its song scares off competitors for scarce resources — including seasonal bounties like the bright-red mistletoe berries that festoon mesquite, paloverde and ironwood trees.

GEORGE ANDREJKO, ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

OLD TUCSON STUDIOS

Relive the Movies at Old Tucson

The movies made there once filled theaters and still fill the television screens of the world. From John Wayne to Clint Eastwood to Audie Murphy, they all ambled down and rode around the streets of Old Tucson Studios. You can see the town created in 1939 as a set for the movie *Arizona* spending the day enjoying the rides. But to get a better sense of the moviemaking that went on there, check out the summer tours.

From 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the summer months, hour-long tours take visitors to some familiar celluloid locations. You may recognize scenery from movies like *El Dorado*, *Gunfight at the OK Corral* and *Three Amigos*. Other spots require the insider information that comes with the guided tour.

For example, the adobes in a wall had a cameo role in *Lilies of the Field* — just the adobes. Those mountains in the background appeared inexplicably in the Midwestern landscape of the television series *Little House on the Prairie*. That's show biz.

Information: (520) 883-0100.

The Hotel Feud Over a Sheriff's Daughter

The rumors in Kingman said it was all about a woman. What else would cause the owners of the swankiest hotel in town to literally split their business in two?

In 1909, partners John Mulligan and J.W. Thompson built the Hotel Brunswick, a beautiful sandstone structure that gave upscale travelers the opportunity to sleep in brass beds and drink from crystal goblets. But in 1912, the two men began feuding over the attentions of the same woman, said to be the sheriff's daughter.

The trouble grew so bitter they divided the property — Mulligan getting the bar on one side, Thompson getting the Chinese restaurant on the other, and each taking control of 25 rooms, with both sides operating under the name Hotel Brunswick.

Today the still-open Brunswick, Kingman's first three-story building, serves as a good example of an Old West hotel. Rates range from $25 for a 10-by-10-foot cowboy room to elegant suites that go for $115 a night. No two rooms are alike and many are decorated with fine antiques.

GERARD GUERON

On Andy Devine Avenue, also known as U.S. Route 66, look for the building with two stone nameplates at its top — one side says Mulligan, the other Thompson.

Tours are available if the hotel isn't full. Information: (928) 718-1800.

DEKON BEAL

Native Seeds Live On

Gardeners who enjoy cultivating a little history along with their honeydews can benefit from a unique seed source for planting unusual, time-honored garden varieties. Anyone who hankers for Hopi red watermelon or craves Cocopah sweet corn can visit Native Seeds/SEARCH (NS/S), a nonprofit organization dedicated to collecting and preserving ancient seeds. The acronym, SEARCH, represents Southwestern Endangered Arid-lands Resource Clearing House. The group operates a retail store in Tucson and publishes a Web site as well as a seed catalog, offering people the chance to grow native Sonoran desert crops.

The idea for the conservation efforts came about in 1983, when Indians of the Tohono O'odham Nation near Tucson wanted to grow traditional crops, but couldn't locate the seeds.

NS/S has evolved into a regional seed bank that plants, harvests and sells heirloom seeds nationwide. The group has collected more than 2,000 crop varieties, including many rare and endangered seeds.

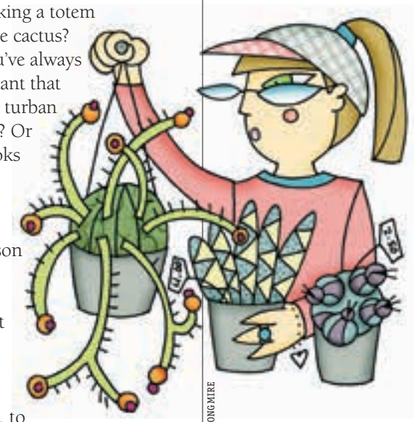
The membership organization operates its Conservation Farm on 60 acres in Patagonia, where they grow as many as 300 different crops, like O'odham pink beans, Hopi rattle gourds and Pima orange lima beans.

NS/S offers an Adopt-A-Crop program to help keep traditional seeds available for future generations. A Native American Outreach Program provides Indian farmers with free seeds, ensuring that tribes can retain their agricultural heritage.

Information: (520) 622-5561 or www.nativeseeds.org.

Every Garden Needs a Touch of the Weird

Has your garden been lacking a totem pole cactus? Perhaps you've always wanted a plant that resembles a turban with spines? Or one that looks like thorny tongue depressors?



LINDA LONGMIRE

The Tucson Botanical Gardens' Weird Plant Sale and Display on June 14, from 8 A.M. to 2 P.M. is the place to go for unusual plants from the handsome to the bizarre. Visitors can add to their own gardens or just enjoy looking at living "rocks," "pincushions," "snowballs" and more.

Access to the sale is free with garden admission.

Information: (520) 326-9686.

Question of the Month

Q What cactus is called the **compass cactus**?

A The single cylinder of the **Arizona barrel cactus leans south-westerly** as it grows to maximize the amount of sunlight it receives — sometimes leaning so far that it topples from its own weight.

CONTRIBUTORS

PETER ALESHIRE
LEO W. BANKS
SALLY BENFORD
WYNNE BROWN
ROSE HOUK
CARRIE M. MINER
MARY PRATT
KATHLEEN WALKER

LIFE IN ARIZONA 1912

HUNTING FOR A WIFE OUT YONDER

An actual letter from Queens, New York, dated December 22, 1912, to Sheriff-elect Jeff Adams of Maricopa County:

"My Dear Sir:

"This is an imposition upon your big-hearted nature. (I know you are a big-hearted man, else you would not be sheriff of a county in that big western country.) . . . I am in search of what I term the perfect woman. I think she is to be found out yonder. In sunset land. I want a wife.

"Simplicity devoid of affectation; depth of character; liberal, yet not radical in point of view; broad in her sympathy toward mankind; disposition sweet, yet firm; philosophic, yet not cynical; lover of books, yet not pedantic; at ease in the saddle, at home in the drawing room — these are the traits I seek.

"What do you think, Mr. Sheriff? Can I find her? She must be an American, for they are the flower of womanhood. I am a bachelor, 38 years of age. Money? . . . I want no money string attached to the woman I seek. If you can aid me in my quest I shall not forget you. I . . . prefer that my name be given no publicity."

ARIZONA STATE ARCHIVES

Many young women, like this 1910 bride, married while employed as Harvey Girls.

Whether the wife-hunting New Yorker met his match is unknown, but we admire his honesty.

Colorado River Assault

TEXT BY PETER ALESHIRE PHOTOGRAPHS BY KERRICK JAMES

Perched on the bright blue tip of the pontoon,

CONFRONT THE RIVER'S BIG RAPIDS, AND THEY'LL CHANGE YOU FOREVER

I try to remember how Craig Lutke told me to clutch the ropes in a big rapid while simultaneously looking expertly nonchalant in front of my loving wife and dubious sons.

Just ahead rumbles House Rock Rapids—a mere low-water 7 on a scale of 10—but still the first substantial froth in our seven-day Grand Canyon odyssey down the Colorado River amid the planet's oldest rocks and biggest rapids. My wife, Elissa, having overcome grave misgivings, sits in the relatively stable middle section of the six-pontoon Western River Expeditions raft. One pontoon over from me sits my older brother Dave, a workaholic lawyer still silently stewing about the stack

of contracts and legal wrangles left back in the real world. But my worries at the moment are Noah and Caleb, our grown, college-student sons.

My paternal aura has dimmed of late, although it was I who taught them to swim when they were but grins and fidgets — encouraging, nurturing and calling out when they sputtered to the surface, "Remember, drink the water, breathe the air." But they were babies then and I was very tall. Now, they're taller and stronger. So all I have left to impress them is expertise and experience.

Except I can't remember how Lutke, the charming, wisecracking Greek god of a boatman, told me to hang onto the ropes lashed across the pontoon as the raft sluices into what suddenly looks like the churning, boiling, spouting, sucking, whirling, fuming end of the world in the bottom of a mile-deep canyon infamous for drownings and heatstroke.

So the raft drops into the rapid, plunges into a hole, climbs up the other side and assaults a whirling wall of 50-degree water, throwing me back hard against the rope. I hang on, while the raft struggles out of the trough and plunges straight down into another furious, ice-blue depression straining to swallow us whole. We smash through and the water smacks into the faces of us fools on the front, wrenching loose my grip. I still have my back hand anchored, but now the raft climbs again, so that the pontoons bend at the center frame, tilting us all back at a 45-degree angle.

I tumble backward in a great wash of water, feet straight up in the air, my back-hand grip wrenched loose by the roll. Someone grabs me before the water can knock me off the raft as we plunge out of House Rock Rapids. I lie on my drowned-rat back in a tangle of legs as everyone yells and hollers and whoops in the unmatched rush of a big rapid. Looking up, I see Jim Illg, who earned his master's in geography before signing on as a Western River Expeditions swamper, all primed to dive in and save me. Caleb and Noah each clutch a handful of my shirt. They look concerned, but maybe that's just from the strain of not laughing.

"You okay?" asks Illg.

"Oh, yeah," I say, abashed.

"Gave 'em all a good look at your shoe size," says Lutke from the

We smash through and the water smacks into the faces of us fools on the front, wrenching loose my grip.

[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 6 AND 7] On a rafting excursion though the Grand Canyon, author Peter Aleshire and his family and other adventurous boaters survive torrents of 50-degree water while plunging through Lava Falls rapids on the Colorado River. [ABOVE] The perilous waves of Hermit Rapids thrust the pontoon skyward. [RIGHT] A slowdown in the river's pace offers a moment to indulge in Canyon lore. [OPPOSITE PAGE] Even in the warmth of summer, rafters' gear includes jackets to protect from inevitable frigid drenchings.

‘Remember, Dad.

Drink the water.

Breathe the air.’

[ABOVE] Author Aleshire (right) and son Caleb Aleshire (left) brave the water for a very short swim.
[OPPOSITE PAGE] Some rafters opt for a waterfall shower at Stone Creek.
[OPPOSITE PAGE, FAR RIGHT] Noah and Dave Aleshire approach the leap in mystical Elves Chasm.

back of the boat, where he went through the rapid standing up.

Everyone laughs.

Noah leans forward, his face sympathetic. “Remember, Dad. Drink the water. Breathe the air.”

So much for the majesty of fatherhood. They had outgrown me.

So we went down into the Grand Canyon, down to the river, down into the earth, down to the beginning of things for our new beginnings built on all the old memories — as the Canyon was built of shale and sandstone and limestone with names like Tapeats and Mauv and Redwall and Supai and Hermit and Coconino and Kaibab, then cut and torn and sculpted and smoothed into something sublime and enduring.

The Canyon takes measure of any person who ventures into it, including the ancestral Puebloans who farmed its meandering terraces, the 35,000 people a year who swing jauntily down a hiking trail to camp overnight and then toil wearily back out, the 20,000 people who fish and sightsee on the 15-mile stretch of quiet water between Glen Canyon Dam and Lee’s Ferry, the 23,000 people who climb apprehensively onto a raft or a dory to run varying lengths of the winding miles of gulps and grandeur, and even the 4 million or so people who arrive yearly to gaze from the incomprehensible edge of this mile-deep gash in the earth.

The Canyon portion of the river drops some 2,000 feet in 277 miles of twists and turns, not so great a fall except that it is concentrated in the major rapids, punctuating the drift through splendor with a spattering of fear and joy where a tributary has dumped a load of boulders. These rapids funnel the river into a drop of 8 to 15 feet, a white-water fury whose real power only the grinning boatmen comprehend.

I studied the books and river guides, trying to comprehend the spectacle of the Canyon’s creation. The earliest drainage systems on the slopes of the Rocky Mountains, ancestors of the present-day Colorado River system, date back just 60 million years when the Colorado Plateau rose in the collision between crustal plates. The river cut down through the layers, removing perhaps 10,000 to 20,000 feet of overlying sediment and eventually exposing the oldest rocks in the Canyon — the 1.84-billion-year-old rock called Elves Chasm gniess in the deep, dark, rapids-plagued heart of the Canyon.

Geologists still debate the origins of the present river, which runs from the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of California and drains chunks of seven states. The present river may be only 6 million years old, cobbled together from the captured drainages of several older rivers.

The river has chewed into the uplifting earth at astonishing speed, thanks to its enormous flood flows. The flow of the river prior to damming varied from spring floods running at 60,000 to 100,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) to low summer flows of 1,000 to 3,000 cfs. Historically, floods of 200,000 to 300,000 cfs have been recorded, and in the distant past there is some evidence of 400,000 cfs.

Hoover and Glen Canyon dams, which bookend the Grand Canyon, have changed everything. While the annual flow remains about the same as the pre-dam river, it is now managed so that high flows are around 20,000 to 25,000 cfs and low flows around 5,000 to 8,000 cfs. During the high-water year of 1983, however, the flow peaked at 92,600 cfs, which nearly washed away Glen Canyon Dam. Lake Powell eliminated the naturally occurring floods but annually traps an estimated 100 million tons of sediment, which has transformed the once warm, muddy river into a clear, cold, 50-degree trout stream.

The dam brought complex changes. It severely impacted the eight species of native fish, but benefited trout; protected river runners from floods, but eroded the beaches where they like to camp and made the rapids worse for lack of floods that move boulders at the mouths of tributaries; washed away native plant and animal species, but enabled other plants to gain a roothold on the formerly flood-scoured shoreline.

For instance, Crystal — one of three class 10 rapids on the river — is the result of a recent debris flow on one of the tributaries at river mile 98. Crystal caused three deaths on pontooned commercial river trips when floods on the tributaries turned it into a raft-flipping monster that overturned even the giant commercial rafts.

But Lutke assures us we are running at a placid 10,000 cfs and should have no trouble navigating Crystal, so long as we hang onto the rope and “suck rubber” by leaning flat against the pontoon as the waves wash over us.

Still, after my debacle in House Rock Rapids, Crystal worries me. As a responsible father, perhaps I should insist my boys sit with me in the center section colorfully nicknamed the “chicken coop.” But knowing Crystal lies two days ahead, I put the matter out of my head through a succession of lesser rapids as we drift past a heap of wonders while the river works its magic on our little group, heating and cooling and smoothing and sculpting.

We glide down the river past the inscription on the rock where a would-be railroad builder drowned for lack of a life jacket in 1889; past Stanton’s cave with its 40,000-year-old driftwood and bones of long extinct birds; past Vaseys Paradise, where a river gushes from the cliff to nurture a riot of poison ivy; past Redwall Cavern, big enough to seat a symphony orchestra and its audience; past the

Anasazi Bridge on a cliff face and 1,000-year-old granaries at Nankoweap; past the blue-green Little Colorado River with its playful waterchute rapids; past the enchanted waterfall of Elves Chasm; past a pensive banjo player in the echoes of a fluted side-canyon; past the 150-foot Deer Creek waterfall that makes its own wind; past the turquoise waters of Havasu Creek; past bighorn sheep and deer and lizards and eagles and peregrine falcons and condors and darting schools of trout.

Confined to the raft and the cliff-hedged campsites, the 17 people aboard fall easily into intimacy and affection. The woman mourning her husband, the breast cancer survivors giddy with life, the adventurer, the painter, the poet, the businessman and the empty-nesters all seek the surcease and succor of the sounding river and the rocks older than human sorrow. We give ourselves to the river, which changes every instant and not at all — both enduring and ephemeral, like life, like love.

We give ourselves to the river, which changes every instant and not at all — both enduring and ephemeral, Like life, like love.

I also see change in Elissa, who has never camped and who eyes rapids with great foreboding. She works her way up to the front seat, topples over in Upset Rapids, comes up laughing and sleeps easily under the stars, wheeling through the glowing band of the Milky Way.

I see it in Dave, who opens up more day by day to the Canyon and the companionship, hiking to hidden waterfalls, and by the last day is laughing on the tip of the foremost pontoon surrounded by a group of women.

I see it in Caleb, whose quick-witted impersonations of Arnold Schwarzenegger charm the whole boat. People call out from the back of the raft, hoping to lure Arnold out for some hilarious commentary.

I see it in Noah, who loves the deep, ancient core of the Canyon — the river-fluted Vishnu Schist, the metamorphosed metaphor for time and the forged earth on which we perch, a thin film of dreams and hope.

[TOP] A challenging trail from the river at Nankoweap leads rafters to a ledge below granaries built by ancestral Puebloan people. Viewed from the ledge, the tranquil-appearing Colorado belies the treachery of its churning rapids.
[ABOVE] Boater Linda Barnes sketches her own souvenir at Deer Creek waterfall.

So by the time we come to Crystal, we are all arrayed on the foremost pontoons with nervous smiles and white knuckles. As Noah snugs into position next to me, I notice that he grips the rope in front with his palm up instead of palm down.

So I change my grip as we slide toward the monster's maw, chanting like druids in a thunderstorm — bearded, battered and brimming with fear and joy. We plunge and roar and scream and laugh as the raft smashes and rolls and climbs and crashes. With a palm-up grip, I cling like a barnacle and watch my sons from the corner of my eye in a heart-stopping, stop-action of splash and fury.

Then we are floating in the incongruous calm below the rapid as Lutke hops up on top of the load — proud as a father at a swimming lesson — to announce that we have graduated into the elite ABC Club — "Alive Below Crystal."

We all laugh and high-five, utterly and unambiguously alive. And I have learned a few things, including the proper grip for a class 10 rapid. My son taught me. AH

ADDITIONAL READING: *Grand Canyon: Time Below the Rim*, a scenic-adventure book published by *Arizona Highways*, connects you with remote sections of the Canyon: waterfalls, streams, thousands of side canyons, ancient rock formations, rock art and other remains of a past civilization, and the entire course of the Colorado River through the Canyon. Winner of the Benjamin Franklin Award for Best Nature Book. Hardcover, 192 pages, $48.95.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Longtime *Arizona Highways* photographer Gary Ladd will lead a Colorado River photography trip on September 6-16. For information, contact Friends of *Arizona Highways*: toll-free (888) 790-7042 or www.friendsofazhighways.com.

Peter Aleshire of Phoenix says he sometimes still wakes in the middle of the night and mistakes the whir of the fan for the sound of the river.

Kerrick James of Mesa says that rafting the Colorado River through Grand Canyon for the sixth time is like rereading a favorite piece of great literature. More is revealed and understood, and it becomes a living part of you.

when you go

LOCATION: Lee's Ferry, a popular starting point for Colorado River trips, is 261 miles north of Phoenix. The Grand Canyon South Rim is 226 miles north of Phoenix.

GETTING THERE: For traveling to Lee's Ferry, drive north from Phoenix on Interstate 17 to Flagstaff, then continue north on U.S. Route 89. At Bitter Springs, exit to U.S. Route 89A and drive 14 miles to the well-marked Lee's Ferry turnoff. To reach the Grand Canyon South Rim, drive west from Flagstaff on Interstate 40 to Williams, then north about 60 miles on State Route 64 to the South Rim entrance station.

FEES: Entrance to Grand Canyon National Park, $20 per vehicle.

LODGING: Marble Canyon Lodge near Lee's Ferry, toll-free (800) 726-1789; South Rim accommodations, toll-free (888) 297-2757.

TRAVEL ADVISORY: Whitewater rafting trips through the Canyon last from one to 30 days and require reservations far in advance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Grand Canyon recorded information, (928) 638-7888; National Park Service comprehensive Web site, including a list of rafting concessioners, www.nps.gov/grca.

ARIZONA'S

Cowboy Poet & Philosopher

Baxter Black offers a calm respite from the day's events text by Bud Wilkinson photographs by Tom Story

The morning radio audience knows Arizona-based humorist Baxter Black as the "Cowboy Poet, Philosopher and Former Large Animal Veterinarian" on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" program. Yes, he's a real-life cowboy, having rodeoed in college and spent his life in the cattle business. And, yes, he's a former veterinarian who makes his living these days telling tales and providing clean entertainment about livestock and rural life — that is, when he's not building fences for a new corral at his ranch near Benson or traveling to the roughly 70 speaking engagements he does a year.

"Probably the worst thing I could do would be to embarrass my friends, people whose values I also hold," Black explains from a wooden chair on his wraparound porch. His home overlooks the San Pedro River valley, down the road from Kartchner Caverns State Park. "I tell stories that are biologically correct because, in my world, cow manure is a part of it, and blood and artificial insemination. That's all part of my world. That's not talking dirty."

Legend has it that "Morning Edition" host Bob Edwards came up with the "Cowboy Poet, Philosopher, etc." label, and it stuck. NPR discovered Black when he submitted a sample of his work, and Edwards and Black agree that he became a regular because he was the only person the Washington, D.C., staff knew "from out there."

Black's a multimedia marvel: an author, columnist, public speaker and radio personality. He says his weekly newspaper column appears in "maybe 130-some" papers in the United States and Canada, while a separate radio show airs on 180 stations. He's contributed to "Morning Edition" for 15 years, written more than a dozen books and put out numerous CDs, videos and cassettes. And he has his own Web site, www.baxterblack.com.

Black never intended to become an entertainer. He grew up in Las Cruces, New Mexico, where his father, a college professor in agriculture, "made sure we always had cows to milk, plus sheep and horses." He attended New Mexico State University and then went to veterinary school at Colorado State University. That led him to a 13-year career as a vet for three livestock companies.

A change in ownership resulted in his being laid off. "I wound up being at a fork in the road and, like Yogi Berra says, I took it, and wound up being an entertainer. That's what I've been doing since 1982. I don't know how long it will last."

From Edwards' vantage point, Black provides a respite from the day's harsh events. "We have a two-hour news program that goes into the stories in-depth," Edwards explains. "On a bad news day, you can hear about a lot of pain and suffering, famine, disease and plague, and you absolutely have to hear from Baxter Black at that point to restore your humanity.

"I don't think there's anyone like Bax. There's no one who uses language like he does. He knows who he is and what he's about."

Black modestly says, "I write what I know about, which is animals and the people who care for them."

The poet-philosopher-former veterinarian knows about cowboy life and has referred to a cowboy as "a sagebrush aristocrat," while scoffing in one opinion piece at the suggestion that cowboys are a vanishing breed. "Some say they're an endangered species, destined to fade into footnotes, like ropes that never get 'throwed.' To that I reply, 'Bull feces.' They're just hard to see from the road."

Black landed in southeastern Arizona in September 1997. He moved with his wife, Cindy Lou; 10-year-old son, Guy; and 24-year-old daughter, Jennifer, from Colorado after having considered El Paso, Albuquerque, Tucson and Phoenix. "None of 'em felt like home," he says. "I'm not a city person." When he drove over a hill on Interstate 10, he says, "This magnificent valley just lay before me. I won't say I pulled the car over, but I knew. Every day I'm here, it's just stronger.

"In northern New Mexico they have a word, *querencia,* from the verb *querer* — to love or desire. This word means, as they describe it, 'a place in the field where the ground is bare and there's no water and no grass and no cover and no shade, and the horses go to stand there. What is there is the memory of the mare, and it's the place where your soul is at peace.'"

That's how Black feels about his rural life in Arizona. "I'm never leaving here. I am home." AH

Connecticut-based Bud Wilkinson owns cowboy boots but feels more comfortable riding the freeways.

City boy Tom Story of Tempe says he's a fan of Baxter Black's commentaries on National Public Radio.

Cowboy poet and former large animal veterinarian Baxter Black offers bemused commentaries about everyday ranch life on his popular feature on National Public Radio. Black delivers his wry observations from a studio near his southern Arizona home (right).

The Wild, Wandering Search for the

7 CITIES OF CIBOLA

Estevan the Moor led an unsuccessful quest for golden castles but found his freedom along the way

Text by RON MCCOY

Illustrations by STEFANO VITALE

THE BEARDED, DARK-SKINNED MAN CARRIES AN INDIAN GOURD rattle decorated with European bells and two feathers — one red, one white. It is April 1539, and the little bells jingle as he treks through the high Chihuahuan Desert of what is now southeastern Arizona.

Two greyhounds race north, ahead of their master, scouting the San Pedro River valley. Behind him march scores of Indians — Sobaipuris, Opatas, maybe Mayos and Yaquis, or even Tlaxcallans from the Valley of Mexico — who flocked to his side as he passed through their lands on a thousand-mile mission in search of the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola.

The man, a North African slave, property of Antonio de Mendoza, the Spanish king's viceroy in distant Mexico City, has rediscovered freedom while wandering the continent with conquistadores Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, Alonzo del Castillo Maldonado, and his former master, Andres Dorantes.

Now, far from the reaches of the powerful viceroy, the slave-explorer feels indestructible — and free. Behind him lags the adventurer-priest, Marcos de Niza, a Franciscan from the south of France. The ostensible leader of the expedition, Fray Marcos, has fallen far behind. The man with the medicine rattle last saw Marcos days ago when he was preparing for the Easter celebration at the village of Vacapa. Impatient with the friar's leisurely pace and religious dedication, he has gone ahead, moving toward the San Pedro River's junction with the Gila River, beyond which he believes riches lie.

The slave possesses a treasure hunter's imagination, fired by incandescent thoughts of laying claim to the wealth of Cibola's legendary seven cities.

Fray Marcos, according to his written narrative of the journey as described in *The Journey of Fray Marcos de Niza,* translated and edited by Cleve Hallenbeck (Southern Methodist University Press, Dallas, reprint of 1949 edition), tells the North African that if he should find a rich, populous land — "something great" — he should retrace his path and report back in person or, because Estevan could

neither read nor write, send Indian runners with a sign: "that if the thing was of moderate importance, he send me a white cross the size of a hand; if it was something great, he send me one of two hands; and if it was something bigger and better than New Spain [Mexico], he send me a large cross."

But the slave has no intention of retracing his steps, ever, and four days later Marcos meets Indians lugging a man-size cross. His guide, the friar writes, "had reached people who gave him information of the greatest thing in the world." Up ahead lay Cibola and six other "very great cities."

Who was this intrepid explorer, the man with the rattle, the first Old World treasure hunter to enter what would become the American Southwest? The Spanish called him Estevan ("Stephen"), describing him as "a black," "an Arabian black" and "a Moor from Azamor [today's Azemmour]" on Morocco's Atlantic coast. The year of his birth is usually rendered as a question mark or "circa 1500."

The Seven Cities of Cibola for which Estevan searched were a myth, created when his ancestors invaded Spain in the eighth century. According to one version of the tale, seven Catholic bishops led a band of terrified Portuguese Christians to safety by sailing away from the Iberian Peninsula. Eventually, those refugees were said to have come to rest in an unknown land, pushed back the wilderness and built seven wealthy cities.

Hundreds of years later — in 1492, the year King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella dispatched Christopher Columbus on his westward journey of discovery — the Spanish Army sent the last of the Moors back to North Africa. By that time, stories of the Seven Cities of Cibola were widespread. Located here one day, there the next, Cibola merged seamlessly with other castles in the air to create an utterly impossible fable. And now in 1539, ironically, Estevan, both slave and descendant of the very Moors whose invasion of Spain created the Cibola legend, serves as point man for Spain's New World treasure hunt.

It was the age of the conquistadores who, fueled by a passion for the three G's — God, gold and glory — tore secrecy's veil from the Americas, looking for Aztec gold and Inca silver. (Marcos de Niza was a veteran of one foray from 1532 to 1535.) The New World gave up real riches aplenty, and because no one knew what other treasures it held, their imaginations took over. Weird, wonderful stories beckoned: the Golden Man, amazon queens and their female warrior attendants, mountains made of diamonds, emeralds as big as fists — and the Seven Cities of Cibola, the richest prize of all.

We know virtually nothing about Estevan's life before 1528, when he arrived on history's stage as the slave of a Spaniard named Andres Dorantes. That year, the two men sailed northward from Cuba with a 300-man expedition to conquer Florida for the glory of God and the greed for gold. Florida took the swagger out of the conquistadores with a catastrophic combination of Indian attacks, disease, accidents and starvation.

The expedition's survivors — only Estevan, Dorantes, de Vaca and Maldonado — made it back to Mexico City. Dependent on Indians for food, shelter and protection, the four men eked out a living by working as seashell traders and healers. Wandering thousands of miles through unknown territory across part of what is now Texas from the Gulf of Mexico through northern Mexico, possibly even through parts of New Mexico and Arizona, they finally encountered Spaniards near Culiacan on Mexico's Pacific coast.

The adventure consumed eight years, but for the first time in Estevan's life he had experienced what his Spanish compatriots had enjoyed their entire lives — respect, equality and freedom. Back in Mexico City he became a slave again, but he kept the symbol of his freedom — the magic gourd from the Plains Indians of Texas.

The "shipwrecked ones," as the four were called, related intriguing news: Indians had told them of large, rich cities to the north. For Estevan and the Spaniards, "cities" meant places like Salamanca, Grenada, Casablanca and Mexico City. No settlement of that magnitude existed in the north. But for the Indians from whom they got the stories, the Pueblo Indian villages of the Southwest certainly qualified as large, rich settlements.

The viceroy, Mendoza, asked if one of the lost-found wanderers would lead a reconnaissance expedition northward into terra incognita. The Spaniards demurred, choosing ro return instead to Spain, so Mendoza purchased Estevan from Dorantes, assigned him to Marcos, obtained the services of an unknown number of Indian attendants, and launched the journey to Cibola from Culiacan in March 1539.

Those events explain how Estevan happened to be walking through the valley of the San Pedro, following a pair of greyhounds, listening to the tinkling of the bells on his sacred gourd, leading a throng of Indians, servants and maidens, until . . . he vanished.

In piecing together what happened to Estevan, we must rely on Fray Marcos, whose veracity long ago fell under such a cloud of suspicion that one scholar branded the priest's written account "a strange tissue of hearsay, fantasy, fact, and fraud." Yet something of Estevan's fate can be teased out of the testimony of three badly frightened Indian eyewitnesses interrogated by Marcos.

Around April 25, Estevan was a day's march from what he thought was Cibola, actually the Zuni pueblo of Hawikuh, a dozen miles or so east of what is now the Arizona-New Mexico line south of modern Gallup, New Mexico. He sent messengers ahead to announce his impending arrival. One of them carried the prized gourd rattle with its European bells and feathers. At Hawikuh a Zuni chief inspected the rattle. Declaring that the rattle belonged to enemies, he angrily hurled it to the ground, threatened the emissaries' lives and ordered them away.

Believing he could sort things out in person, Estevan pushed on, reaching Hawikuh around sunset. The Zunis confiscated his possessions — mostly turquoise and feathers received from Indians during his journey — confined the intruders to a dwelling outside the pueblo and refused them food and water.

The next morning, Estevan and his companions left the dwelling. Zunis poured out from Hawikuh, and the explorers ran. "We saw no more of Estevan," a survivor reported, "but we believe that they shot him with arrows as they did the rest who were with him, of whom there escaped none but us."

Marcos himself probably never ventured north of the present-day international border. Marcos later told the viceroy that he had advanced "until within sight of Cibola," the smallest of the seven cities. There was "much gold." It was a "very beautiful town," "bigger than the city of Mexico." Small wonder the viceroy blessed provincial Governor Francisco Vasquez de Coronado's efforts to organize a 700-man expedition to Cibola.

When Coronado reached the Hawikuh area in July 1540, where he expected to find gold, his men fought their way into the Zuni villages. Coronado wrote that inhabitants admitted killing Estevan because "he was a bad man . . . and because he assaulted their their women." (But another conquistador heard that Estevan was killed so he could not tell his people about Cibola.) As for Coronado, he found no gold, just six (not seven) small villages. The reality mocked the description given by Marcos, who accompanied Coronado and was immediately sent back to Mexico in disgrace.

Two years passed before Coronado gave up marching toward the ever-receding horizon in his quest for Cibola. He simply could not accept the prosaic truth: He had already been there while among the Zunis. Besides, other tribes along the way kept him moving beyond their homelands by telling him additional tales about other fantasies somewhere "out there."

Coronado reached the plains of Kansas before giving up the impossible dream and turning back. He believed his expedition a failure. But history renders a different judgment: The search for the Seven Cities of Cibola begun by Estevan was what really mattered because it opened people's eyes to the vast continent's limitless possibilities.

Estevan the Moor remains today a largely unrecognized figure. Some see his visage in the black face of the Hopi and Zuni Chakwaina ogre kachina, while the makers of monuments and namers of places ignore him. But he earned a place in history as the first person to search for the treasure trail to Cibola and maybe the first non-European foreigner to enter the future American Southwest of Arizona and New Mexico.

A slave, he found brief freedom by boldly setting off into the unknown. A black Ulysses wanderer, he came from an exotic land and spent his life journeying to other exotic places. For him, "Cibola" was probably as much a state of mind as an actual place.

Estevan is forever a part of Arizona's myth and memory. Just ask anyone who ventures into the valley of the San Pedro, frees up his or her imagination and hears the faint tinkling of bells from a roving specter seeking fulfillment of dreams in a place called Cibola. AH

SUGGESTED READING: Coronado's search for the Seven Cities of Cibola is only one of New Spain's early adventures out West that you can discover in *Into the Unknown: Adventures on the Spanish Colonial Frontier*. One of the *Arizona Highways* Wild West series of books, *Into the Unknown* is available for $7.95, plus shipping and handling, by calling toll-free (800) 543-5432. In Phoenix or from outside the United States, call (602) 712-2000.

Ron McCoy teaches history at Emporia State University in Kansas. Raised in southern Arizona, he returns to the state as often as he can.

Stefano Vitale of Venice, Italy, gained a special relationship with the Southwest when he attended school in Los Angeles and traveled frequently in Arizona and New Mexico.

The SEARCH for the Seven Cities of Cibola begun by Estevan was what really mattered because it opened people's eyes to the vast continent's limitless possibilities.

Land of Majestic, Towering Rock

A Portrait of Arizona's Mogollon Rim Country

By GREGORY McNAMEE

[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 20 AND 21] Rising up to 8,000 feet above Arizona's central highlands, the Mogollon Rim forms the precipitous leading edge of the great Colorado Plateau. Here, sunrise lights the Rim's jagged cliff-face near Hi View Point as the Mazatzal Mountains hug the distant horizon. NICK BEREZENKO [LEFT] The Tonto National Forest's vast tracts of ponderosa pines recede below Promontory Butte. PETER ENSENBERGER [BELOW] High-country snowmelt fuels Haigler Creek's rush past a vibrant stand of yellow monkeyflowers. JEFF SNYDER

In central Arizona, not far from the headwaters of the Verde River, rises a wall of stone that divides the tall Colorado Plateau from the lower deserts to the south and west. It forms a great weather-carved rampart, an imposing boundary between two vast geological provinces. It bears a name that looks imposing in its own right: the Mogollon Rim.

Named for an 18th-century governor of the Spanish province of New Mexico, the Mogollon — Arizonans pronounce it "muggy-OWN" — Rim stretches more than 300 miles across Arizona's forested midriff, making a bridge of sorts between the weathered Hurricane Cliffs northwest of the Grand Canyon and the southernmost Rocky Mountains. Not many of the world's escarpments are longer. Only a few rise taller than the Mogollon Rim, which stands between 7,000 and 8,000 feet above sea level across much of its range.

And only a few are as formidable. John Gregory Bourke, the 19th-century U.S. Army officer who explored much of the Mogollon Rim, described the country that spills out below its sharp cliffs as "so cut up by ravines, arroyos, small stream beds and hills of very good height that it may safely be pronounced one of the roughest spots on the globe."

Bourke had good reason to think so, for the history of the Mogollon Rim is one of chaos and cataclysm. Here, many millions of years ago, lava boiled up from the depths

(Text continued on page 27)

It is majestic, even daunting, and one of the most awe-inspiring vistas seen anywhere on the North American continent.

[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 24 AND 25] Near the western edge of the Colorado Plateau, the fog-shrouded West Fork of Oak Creek Canyon slices through the Mogollon Rim near Harding Point. BRUCE GRIFFIN [ABOVE] The least visited and most remote of the Rim Country lakes, Knoll Lake derives its name from the tiny ponderosa pine-covered island at its center. NICK BEREZENKO

(Continued from page 23)

of the Earth to form islands of rock. Here tremors shook the very mountains as subterranean blocks of stone heaved and settled. Here the land, as ever-changing as the sea and constantly in motion, was bent and broken by subsurface fractures, worn away by falling, freezing, thawing water and sand-laden winds, reshaped as easily, it seems, as clay in a child's hands.

All those forces may sound distressingly violent, but, geologically speaking, they are all in a day's — or an eon's — work. Still, in few other places have they left their imprint on the land quite so impressively as at the Mogollon Rim, where the massive reef of the Colorado Plateau falls away to meet the floor of ancient shallow seas and worn lava flows of the desert.

Confronted with all its terrible majesty, and aware of its tumultuous past, Bourke was moved to call the Mogollon Rim "a strange freak of nature," a term that conjures up images of the surreal, the bizarre and the downright unpleasant. Surreal and bizarre the landscape is, to be sure, especially at the point where the escarpment throws up its first great barrier between plateau and desert.

But unpleasant? Few people today would think so, for at that point are the spectacular rust-colored cliffs and the skyscraper-sized buttes above Sedona — among the great wonders of the natural world. There, within the Mogollon Rim's red sandstone wall, stands silent testimony to the Earth's ever-changing history in the form of countless fossils, the rock-entombed remnants of creatures — mollusks, coral, ancestral fish — that lived in and alongside ancient oceans. Broken by the freezing and melting of water over millions of years, Sedona's towering cliffs are a wondrous sculpture garden whose exhibits bear names such as Coffeepot Rock, Bell Rock, Cathedral Rock and Mitten Ridge,

(Text continued on page 31)

[PRECEDING PANEL, PAGES 28 AND 29] A challenging scramble into the West Clear Creek Wilderness rewards hikers with scenes of surpassing beauty, like the gentle grotto encircling a 10-foot waterfall. JEFF SNYDER
[LEFT] Spring-fed Horton Creek emerges just below the Mogollon Rim north of Payson. NICK BEREZENKO
[BELOW] A sweep of bracken ferns carpets the forest floor under a grove of Gambel oak and ponderosa pine trees near Baker Butte.
ROBERT G. McDONALD

(Continued from page 27)
names that more than hint at their shapes.

The name of Oak Creek Canyon is less suggestive of the striking sight that awaits the traveler, but there, too, the Mogollon Rim, now a full-fledged adult, rises far into the sky — so far, and so abruptly, that people with even the slightest fear of heights can be forgiven for closing their eyes on approaching its edge. A well-made two-lane highway now climbs the walls of the canyon; it offers stunning views of the red rocks far below. The view was much the same a century ago, when a narrow wagon road wound downward from the ponderosa pine-covered rimtop, joining Flagstaff to the Verde Valley.

Zane Grey, in his 1924 novel *Call of the Canyon,* told of an Eastern tenderfoot's first tentative, scared-silly glimpse over the Rim's edge: ". . . The very forest-fringed Earth seemed to have opened into a deep abyss, ribbed by red rock walls and choked by steep mats of green timber. The chasm was a V-shaped split and so deep that looking downward sent at once a chill and a shudder over Carley. At that point it appeared narrow and ended in a box. In the other direction, it widened and deepened, and stretched farther on between tremendous walls of red, and split its winding floor of green with glimpses of a gleaming creek, boulder-strewn and ridged by white rapids. A low mellow roar of rushing waters floated up to Carley's ears. What a wild, lonely, terrible place! . . . It frightened her — the sheer sudden plunge of it from the heights. . . . Carley had never gazed upon a scene like this. Hostile and prejudiced, she yet felt wrung from her an acknowledgment of beauty and grandeur. But wild, violent, savage! Not livable! This insulated rift in the crust of the Earth was a gigantic burrow for beasts, perhaps for outlawed men — not for a civilized person."

Such is the exhilarating albeit petrifying spectacle that Carley Burke, the heroine of Grey's novel, meets after having traveled to Arizona to find her fiance, who has hidden himself away in the depths of Oak Creek Canyon to escape his awful memories of the trenches of World War I. When Carley finally finds him in what many Arizonans hold to be some of the most beautiful country our state has to offer, her beloved refuses to leave his newfound home, "violent" and "savage" though it may be. Reflecting on the dangerous wilds of New York from which she has traveled, Carley eventually comes

to see his point and determines to get beyond her fear of vertiginous places. In no time at all, she transforms herself into a distinguished citizen of the Rim.

Carley's creator, a noteworthy Rim resident himself, made much the same decision. Zane Grey (1872–1939), an Ohio dentist, decided nearly a century ago to remake himself as a writer and outdoorsman under the Mogollon's cliffs, trading the crowded East for what was then little-known, barely mapped country. An avid hunter and fisherman, Grey came to know that territory as well as anyone in his day, celebrating it in dozens of novels and essays on the outdoors. His portraits of many of its places remain remarkably accurate even after a century of change — though Sedona, of course, has grown from a quiet farming village to one of America's premier tourist destinations, visited by millions of people each year, thanks in large part to just those "wild, lonely, terrible" views.

Grey made his home in a secluded valley a few score miles east of Oak Creek Canyon, where he wrote such famed books as *Riders of the Purple Sage* and *Code of the West*. It is a fine place, nestled in the rocks and trees above Kohls Ranch, and though Grey's log home was destroyed by fire in 1990 — fire, as any Rim aficionado will tell you, being a constant companion in this densely forested land — the site still boasts a superb view of the rough-and-tumble country below it.

Above it, now having passed by the Verde River and the fantastic, churned-up landscapes of the Fossil Springs Wilderness — truly one of the Earth's roughest places, as John Gregory Bourke rightly noted, and a living laboratory for students of geological history — the Mogollon Rim attains its full grandeur. From the vantage point of Payson, not far from Grey's old place, the escarpment looks like a mighty tidal wave two thousand feet tall that is just about to break, engulfing everything in its path. Vaulting above great forests of ponderosa pine and sweeping landscapes of rugged, boulder-strewn country, it stretches from horizon to horizon, commanding the very sky.

This is the Mogollon Rim marked as such on road maps, perhaps the most spectacular part of the much longer whole. And this is the great wall-to-wall view that comes to mind when you mention the name to most old-time Arizonans. It is majestic, even daunting, and one of the most awe-inspiring vistas seen anywhere on the North American

[BELOW] Scarlet-tinged bigtooth maple and golden-leaved Gambel oak trees arch above a secluded glade in Maple Draw.
NICK BEREZENKO
[RIGHT] Cascading water sculpts a rift of Coconino sandstone in West Clear Creek Wilderness.
RANDY PRENTICE

Call it a paradise, period, this gigantic garden of tall trees, clear streams, and, everywhere, those mighty, weathered cliffs.

[ABOVE] Falling rain punctuates a stormy sunset in this view from the Mogollon Rim near Woods Canyon Lake. WILLARD CLAY

continent. The view is just as impressive from the opposite direction, and gazing down at the Tonto Basin from the top of the Rim, you can see for a hundred miles.

Here, blanketed in snow in winter, a great factory of lightning storms in the height of summer, the Mogollon Rim becomes something independent of time, it seems, a world unto itself. Here, where cell phone coverage is spotty and habitations few and far between, a traveler can spend hours wandering the dirt-and-gravel, rimside General Crook Trail, built to connect central Arizona's military outposts during the Apache Wars, without seeing another person. Here it is easy to imagine that nothing has changed since the days of John Gregory Bourke, who exulted in what he saw along the way, writing in his memoir *On the Border with Crook,* "One rides along the edge and looks down two and three thousand feet into what is termed the 'Tonto Basin,' a weird scene of grandeur and rugged beauty. . . . It is an awe-inspiring sensation to be able to sit or stand upon the edge of such a precipice and look down upon a broad expanse mantled with juicy grasses, the paradise of live stock."

And the paradise of elk and deer, which, it seems, are far more numerous than humans in this part of Arizona. The paradise of rock squirrels and black bears. The paradise of generations of hunters, ancient and modern, of rockhounds and cowboys, of prospectors and hermits, of pilgrims seeking the solace and beauty of nature. Call it a paradise, period, this gigantic garden of tall trees, clear streams, and, everywhere, those mighty, weathered cliffs.

This is the Mogollon Rim: no freak, with all respect to Colonel Bourke, but instead one of the greatest treasures in this already rich place. Arizonans cherish it now, just as they have for decades and centuries, as part of what makes our state different from any other. They are certain to do so for generations to come, even as earthquakes rumble, lava bubbles, seafloors rise and the world is remade again and again. AH

Gregory McNamee of Tucson spends as much time as possible exploring and enjoying the awe-inspiring Mogollon Rim.

Getting to Know Charlie

Friendship with a bald eagle doesn't come easy

text and photographs by BILL BARCUS

Getting to know an eagle requires spending time with one. Not an easy task, especially when it comes to Arizona's bald eagles.

I often reflect on my chance meeting with the two bald eagles I eventually came to know well. How the eagles viewed their relationships with man and camera, I'm not sure, but they seemed to tolerate my presence. I photographed them for two years during the nesting seasons of late winter and spring.

I had given up hope of encountering other bald eagles on my forest hikes. That is until I bumped into Charlie.

To say that I bumped into Charlie is an understatement. The fact is, I almost tripped over him.

Gus, my Labrador retriever, was at my side on a forest hike. In two hours the sun was going to set behind Pine Mountain to the west of the Verde River. Overhead, the sounds of a gentle spring breeze whirled through the needles of the ponderosa pine trees. Pleasing aromas of the season — cliff rose and mountain mahogany in bloom — floated on the wind.

I decided to end the day's hike and made my way toward a small pond. At water's edge, I was engrossed in the luster of spring and paid little attention to the small-sized, brown stump. Nearly tripping over the stump, I thrust out my hands and caught my balance just in time.

But the stump was not a stump. It moved, taking the shape of a large figure with brownish feathers and a snowy-white head. Beady yellow eyes glared up at me.

I grabbed Gus by the collar and yanked him away from the eagle. Our blundering intrusion might go unexcused. Retreating into a thicket of Gambel oak trees, I caught my breath and began to assess the bald eagle's plight from a safer distance.

The eagle turned in our direction and stared defiantly at the two intruders. The plumage on the bird's head ruffled in the wind as it waddled, ducklike, toward us — characteristic of the manner in which bald eagles walk.

[ABOVE AND OPPOSITE PAGE] Charlie the bald eagle eyes with skepticism author Bill Barcus' attempts at interspecies communication.

The eagle stopped and perched on a rock. As if to study us more intently, the bird affixed its eyes on us with a piercing gaze associated only with birds of prey.

Old age? I pondered. Perhaps. An injury, or a broken wing? No, I decided not, when the eagle raised its wings and fanned the wind.

I watched for two hours. The bird eventually waded into the water — as if to prey on frogs that inhabited the pond, but it never attempted to catch one. Then it returned again to the rock perch.

I decided to dub the eagle Charlie. Maybe, I thought, it's because the bird walks like Charlie Chaplin, awkwardly and comically. And I figured it was a male because of its size. The bird was smaller in size than a female, a characteristic of bald eagles.

I fumbled in my daypack for a leftover ham and cheese sandwich. Crawling on my hands and knees, I stopped a few yards from the eagle and tossed the sandwich into the air, aiming at the bird's feet.

The eagle's keen eyes tracked the flight of the sandwich. Charlie flinched as it landed ham-side down. Other than that, he made no response. No attempt to eat my sandwich. Not even a gesture of thanks. Well, that's an eagle for you.

In the growing darkness, I decided to leave the eagle and the fate of the sandwich until morning.

At daylight I hiked back to the pond. Since bald eagles are fishers and their diets are comprised largely of fish, I'd loaded my daypack with a dozen pan-sized rainbow trout taken from my freezer and thawed during the night.

Charlie stood where I left him. The sandwich had disappeared. The eagle scrutinized my every movement as I pulled the trout from the daypack and tossed them one by one at the bird's feet.

Again, no response — just the heart-cutting glare of the bird's eyes and a statue-like composure.

I silently wondered if Charlie preferred not to eat in the company of humans. I left him to contemplate his breakfast and to decide what he really wants to be. An eagle or not?

When I returned to check on Charlie a few days later, I discovered he had eaten the trout and gone on to do what eagles do best — soar high above the ground, slipping gracefully through the clouds and heavens on the wind currents.

I've since wondered if I'll ever get to know another eagle, especially one like Charlie. But then again I've wondered, too, if anyone has ever really known an eagle.

Perhaps I have. AH

Bill Barcus of Pine works for the Tonto National Forest and keeps an eye out for eagles.

Hunt for the Army commander's elusive Bradshaw Mountains tub site leaves a ring of uncertainty

COME CLEAN, GENERAL CROOK: DID YOU TAKE A BATH

[ABOVE] Gathering storm clouds over Crooks Canyon in the Bradshaw Mountains south of Prescott threaten adventurers in search of a place known to some as Crook's Baths, where Gen. George F. Crook is said to have bathed in the 1870s. [OPPOSITE PAGE] Don Johnston (left) and author Leo W. Banks consult a map, although Crook's Baths doesn't appear on it.

TEXT BY LEO W. BANKS PHOTOGRAPHS BY EDWARD McCAIN

THE RAIN MADE ME NERVOUS. It feathered on my shirt, barely dampening the fabric, a weak companion to the sweat that sprinted like a spider down my back.

No, I had little fear of getting drenched in this meek August storm. What worried me was that it was raining at all.

I saw the rain as an omen, another sign that our miniexpedition into a hidden canyon in central Arizona's Bradshaw Mountains was a fool's errand.

But we kept slogging along the brush-tangled streambed. High above, thunder

clapped, and we were unable to look up to gain perspective for fear we'd lose footing on the maze of rocks at our feet.

Meanwhile, the canyon walls soared higher as they funneled us toward a destination that might not exist.

Crook's Baths doesn't merit a spot on any official map, or a listing in books of Arizona place names. Its history falls largely under the category of supposition. Even the name is suspect.

By my calculation, it has appeared in print exactly one time, and that was in an *Outdoor Arizona* magazine article 25 years ago.

Its author claimed that the greatest Indian fighter in Arizona, U.S. Army Gen. George F. Crook, made his way into this same canyon in the 1870s to relax in rock pools carved by eons of water, thus serving up the memorable moniker of Crook's Baths.

Is it true or historical fantasy? I wanted to find the answer, and I was especially intrigued at the notion of spending an afternoon dallying at the general's open-air bathtub.

After a number of calls to outdoorsmen, I found Don Johnston, a 70-year-old retired teacher who has hiked extensively in the Bradshaws and knew the area of the baths' supposed location, about 19 miles south of Prescott.

But he'd never heard of the baths either. When I asked if he wanted to try to find them, he asked, "Are you sure they're in there?"

"No," I answered.

"Then," Johnston said, "this could be just a wild goose chase."

"That's right."

"Sounds like fun," he said. "So when do you want to go?"

On a cloudy summer morning, photographer Edward McCain and I, with Johnston as guide, drove south of Prescott on the Senator Highway, County Road 56, through Groom Creek and beyond the turnoff to Hassayampa Lake.

'But if he wasn't here looking for gold,' McCAIN ASKED, 'does it make sense that he would come in to take a bath?'

The road toughened up beyond the 10-mile mark, twisting around tight mountain curves. But we weren't concerned with the nature of the terrain. We had a jumble of facts about Crook to sort through.

I laid out for McCain and Johnston what I'd learned from my earlier research. The brilliant, taciturn general commanded U.S. military forces in Arizona, for the first time from 1871 to 1875, years in which he was swept up in a burgeoning gold boom in the Bradshaws. He staked at least three mining claims in Yavapai County, probably more.

The highway on which we drove led into Crooks Canyon, named for the general. And

[ABOVE] Johnston (left), an outdoorsman who knows the area, agreed to the search with Banks (right), a writer in search of an adventure to tell. [RIGHT] Treading perhaps where no man but Crook had trodden, Johnston bushwhacks his own path near Crooks Canyon.

it bypassed the site of General Crook Mine, which, according to early newspapers, produced more than a half-million dollars in gold over a 10-year span. It later became the Venezia Mine, still marked today on Forest Service maps.

The canyon also held a small town, probably located 11 miles south of the Venezia on the bank of the Hassayampa River, called Crook City. Hearing my findings, McCain said, "It sounds like we're on the right track."

"But I'm still not sure that Crook was in this particular canyon," I said, adding that I never found claim papers for the Crook Mine containing the general's signature. In fact, one source said the mine was founded in 1874 by Ed Johnson.

"Even if he were here," I said, "there's no proof he was involved in the Crook Mine."

I explained that in the early days of the Apache Wars, some of the besieged settlers in Yavapai County revered Crook for his skill at killing renegades. The rambunctious John Marion, anti-Apache editor of Prescott's newspaper, the *Arizona Miner*, went so far as to name one of his sons after Crook.

It's possible, I told McCain and Johnston, that Crook had no involvement in the mine, and that Johnson named it for him as an homage.

"But if he wasn't here looking for gold," McCain asked, "does it make sense that he would come in to take a bath?"

"You know what they say about generals," I said.

Just below the Venezia at the 15-mile mark, we pulled up to Palace Station, a log cabin built in 1875 by Alfred and Matilda Spence. Two years after its construction, the building, now a national historic site, became a stagecoach stop along a route to some of the area's bustling mines.

Caretaker Debbie Shivers met us in the back yard with a welcoming hello and asked what brought us to her corner of the Prescott forest. I told her we were looking for Crook's Baths.

"Never heard of them," she said. The way things were going, I wasn't surprised.

Shivers invited us to visit with her on the porch. We heard about her life without electricity, running water or indoor plumbing. The family bathroom is in the fifth wheel trailer she and husband, Mike, park about 50 feet behind the cabin.

"You should see me trying to get to the bathroom on winter mornings, wearing my nightgown and snowshoes," she said. Laughing, she continued, "But it's worth it to live out here. It's so beautiful and quiet."

A good number of her visitors are gold panners, a holdover from the boom days in Crooks Canyon, and she frequently sees evidence of bears.

She told of walking one morning with her dogs, Babe and Smooches, and spotting a footprint she thought was human. Shivers wondered why someone would be walking through the forest barefoot.

On closer inspection, she saw it was a bear print, which tends to get the heart pumping. Johnston has run across a few as well.

"Those pigeon-toed bear tracks are good

[ABOVE RIGHT AND BELOW] Debbie Shivers and her husband, Mike, relish the quiet life without electricity or plumbing at Palace Station. Built in 1875 and abandoned in 1910, the log cabin served as a stage stop between Prescott and Phoenix.

to see," he said, "but only if you're going the other way."

Shivers tried to settle Babe, a chocolate Lab, and Smooches, a German shorthair. They were so excited by the company that they danced and panted at our feet.

"Where are these baths supposed to be?" Shivers asked.

I showed her a scribbled map accompanying the 1978 article. It placed the baths 4 miles south of Palace Station.

Shivers grimaced. "I sure hope you've got good tires," she said. "I can't tell you how many times people have had blowouts down there, and my husband has had to go pull them out."

We continued down Crooks Canyon on Forest Service Road 82, less certain than before that we would find what we were looking for.

The road deteriorated quickly, becoming little more than a jeep trail on which any speed greater than 5 miles per hour was tricky.

"Imagine the work it took to build this road," Johnston said as we jostled along. "That's what gold does to people."

At a glen where the road straightened, we sat on logs and ate lunch. Three deer came by to visit. They walked unaware to within 40 feet of us, then picked up the sound of our voices, and strangely, came even closer before disappearing behind some oak trees.

The peekaboo clouds that had hovered over us since morning were solid, and heavy thunder shook the ground. Its effect was more dramatic in this landscape, walled in by sloping, tree-covered hills that formed an ever-tightening ravine, magnifying every sound.

After inching over road rocks for a solid hour, we reached the intersection of FR 82 and 82A. Unable to drive farther, we pulled out our rain gear and hiked down to the east fork of the Hassayampa River, then began walking the dry streambed.

"How far do you figure from here?" said McCain, loading film into his camera.

"If that map was right, the baths shouldn't be more than 2 miles down," Johnston said.

"If they're there at all," McCain said.

The rain started as soon as we did, pattering onto our ponchos and rain hats. It never got heavy, but it hampered visibility and got me fretting about omens.

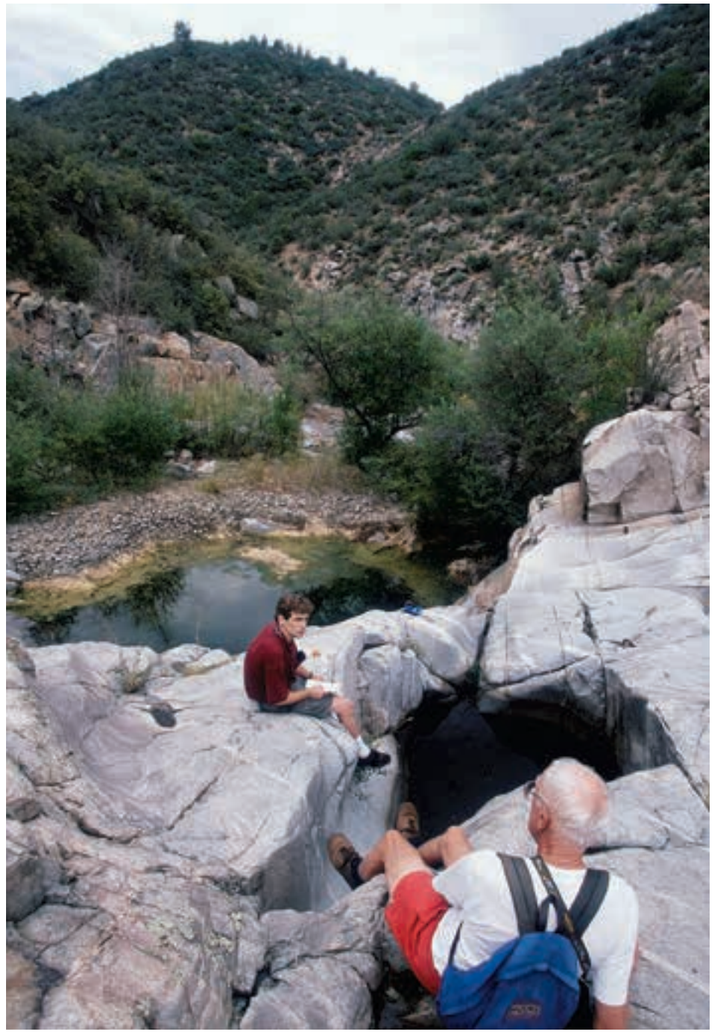
Johnston, who happens to be built like an X-ray, proved to be a remarkable hiker. He was able to spring over boulders and climb rain-slickened ridges. He also had good knowledge of the land.

"See this," he said, pointing to a large hole in the streambed. "It looks like somebody was trying to find gold. Sometimes people come to places like this with motorized pumps and hoses and spray the side of the wash to get at the gold."

As we had bounced along the road from Palace Station, we passed a number of rock cairns that modern miners use to mark claims. From the streambed, we noticed a wooden post on the hillside above us, a jar

'There's a bathtub up here!' HE HOLLERED AFTER FOLLOWING A SHARP TURN IN THE CREEK. 'This is it! We've found it!'

[BELOW LEFT] Though lacking a bath mat and towel, this water-filled hole may have served as a tub for General Crook.
[RIGHT] Perhaps contemplating an invigorating outdoor bath after their hike, Banks and Johnston rest beside a rocky pool.



attached to it by a screw through the cap.

The paperwork inside the jar was indecipherable to me, with its hieroglyphic map coordinates and positioning guides. But I was careful putting it back just the same. It's always good to be respectful of other men's dreams, decipherable or not.

The evidence of modern mining made me hopeful. At least it was some link to the gold boom that supposedly brought Crook to this place.

His baths remained elusive, however. We did pass a couple of granite formations we thought might serve as tubs after a heavy rain, although nothing shouted out that this was the place.

That changed after an hour of difficult hiking. The echoing shout came from McCain, by then walking in the lead, far ahead of Johnston and me.

"There's a bathtub up here!" he hollered after following a sharp turn in the creek. "This is it! We've found it!"

Johnston and I caught up to him at a pinch in the canyon marked by huge slabs of gray-granite rock. They were highly polished and stretched the width of the streambed. Across the tops of the boulders were several water depressions, and the angling together of the big rocks would create several more bathlike spots.

Johnston climbed the slabs and looked around. "I wasn't sure we'd get here," he said. "But this is definitely it."

With a years-long drought in Prescott, he was shocked to find that some of the pools still had water in them, far more than this day's scant rain had produced. A smooth, funnel-shaped rock leading to a large pool on flat ground below the boulders was evidence of just how much water had run through here in times past, and perhaps in Crook's day.

A watermark high on the canyon wall did not contain the general's carved initials, to McCain's joshing surprise.

"Even if Crook didn't bathe here, he should have," McCain said.

"That's right," Johnston agreed. "This is a fabulous spot."

We hadn't confirmed the general's presence in these rock pools, but we'd had fun trying.

The rain had stopped, so we stretched out on the rocks under what had become a warm sun, relishing the peace and seclusion. Later, as we hiked out, McCain said, "We haven't seen another person since we left Palace Station."

"You could stay out here a year and not see another person," Johnston added.

"Perfect for bathing," I said.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Yes, we asked, and the Forest Service doesn't know anything about Crook's Baths.

Tucsonan Leo W. Banks has studied General Crook's career and enjoyed following in his footsteps in the Bradshaw Mountains.

For Edward McCain of Tucson, the search for the general's rock baths was like being a character in a detective novel and using clues to follow a long- abandoned trail.

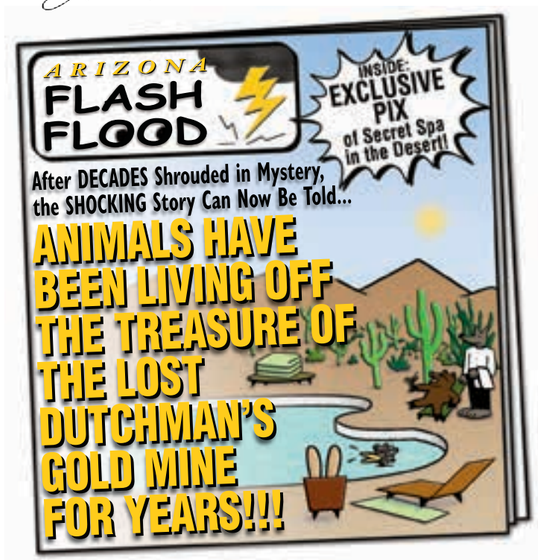
when you go

LOCATION: Prescott is 102 miles north of Phoenix. The rock baths are located in the Prescott National Forest, about 18 miles south of Prescott.
GETTING THERE: Take the Senator Highway, which begins at the top of Mt. Vernon Street in Prescott, south of town. After 7 miles, the pavement ends, and the road gets bumpy. For safety and ease of passage, especially after a rain, a high-clearance vehicle is recommended. The drive to Palace Station is 8 more miles. From there, drive on Forest Road 82 south about 2.3 miles to its intersection with FR 82A. This portion of the trip is very rough, requiring a high-clearance vehicle or four-wheel drive. The possible bath sites are about a mile and a half south of the intersection along the streambed in Crooks Canyon. The hike from the intersection to the baths is difficult and not recommended for inexperienced hikers.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Prescott National Forest, Bradshaw Ranger District, (928) 443-8000.

humor

"My HMO insurance plan is a little cheap. Instead of anesthesia, they just provide you with a flock of numbered sheep." *

IT'S Snow JOKE by Vicky Snow



Unusual Perspective

By Linda Perret

A kangaroo rat doesn't perspire because it lacks sweat glands.

That's why you see so few of them in deodorant commercials.

EARLY-DAY ARIZONA

Neighbor's pretty daughter: "How much is this a yard?"
Draper's son: "Only one kiss."
Neighbor's pretty daughter: "If it's so cheap I'll take three yards, and Grandma will pay you."

The Flagstaff Sun-Democrat
April 1, 1897

GUNFIGHTERS

In January we asked our readers for gunfighter jokes. Here are some we received:

The Old West gunfighter was lucky to live in the day of the horse and buggy. Today he'd get run down in the street.

Guy Belleranti, Oro Valley

In the Old West, when a gunfighter avoided a duel by being conveniently out of town, the missing gunfighter was called a free-range chicken.

Mel Loftus, Holmen, WI

My uncle wasn't the toughest gunfighter. He used a "salad shooter."

Tom Padovano, Jackson Heights, NY

What did they say about the slowest gunfighter in the state of Arizona?

"Rest in peace."

Tom Sushinski, Sierra Vista

Question: Did you hear about the abstract artist who started a new career as a gunfighter?

Answer: He was quick on the draw, but it was hard to tell what he was aiming for.

Question: When is a gunfighter all washed up?

Answer: When he uses a water pistol.

Lori Pfeiffer, Mesa

Question: What do you call a gunfighter-turned-newspaper-editor?

Answer: A punfighter

Andrew Moore, Bend, OR

Question: What do you call a clean-cut, well-behaved gunfighter?

Answer: A failure.

Bobbie Krekk, Raunheim, Germany

HUNTING SEASON

Alpine's Bear Wallow Cafe bustled with this season's elk hunters on their way to one of Arizona's prime hunting grounds. One "hunter," covered head to toe in camouflage, face paint and all, motioned Max, the evening's host, over to the table. The "hunter" asked him, "So how old does a deer have to be before it can be considered an elk?"

Stacie Burk, Springerville

MAKING ROCKS

A visitor from Scotland and I decided to take in a jeep tour in Sedona. We shared the jeep with two women from New York who were commenting on the beauty of Arizona. As we left town, our guide launched into a discussion of various rock formations.

When we turned into a particularly scenic area, one of the New Yorkers tapped the guide on the shoulder and asked him how long it had taken the rocks to get this way. "Millions of years," he replied.

"Yes," she said, "but how did they know just where to put the dynamite?"

Barbara Lawson, Mesa

TO SUBMIT HUMOR

Send your jokes and humorous Arizona anecdotes to Humor, *Arizona Highways*, 2039 W. Lewis Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85009 or e-mail us at editor@arizonahighways.com. We'll pay $50 for each item used. Please include your name, address and telephone number with each submission.

Reader's Corner

Dust storms usually occur in late winter or early spring. It just so happens to be a coincidence that this is usually the time that I clean out under my bed.

Dust devils are this month's topic. Send us your dust devil jokes and we'll pay $50 for each one we publish.

* From the Witworks® humor book *HMOs, Home Remedies & Other Medical Jokes* by Linda Perret. To order, call toll-free (800) 543-5432 or visit arizonahighways.com.

destination

by KATHLEEN WALKER / photographs by GEORGE STOCKING

PATAGONIA LAKE STATE PARK South of Tucson Has an OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE for Almost Everyone

EVEN IN THE POURING RAIN, THEY LINE UP: cars, trucks and behemoth recreational vehicles. They aren't looking for a way out of the weather but a way into Patagonia Lake State Park, an hour and a half south of Tucson.

"Hi there," Park Ranger Cynthia Cano greets each arrival. She stands at the gate, ignoring the rain but not the questions.

"Anyone say whether the fish are biting yet?" asks a young man traveling alone with his fishing rods resting in the passenger seat.

"You don't have to 'rassle' bears or anything?" wonders a woman, who says she's thought about being a ranger.

"There are all kinds of bears," quips Cano. She and the other rangers have one on their hands today: albeit gentle, a 265-acre lake in the middle of the Sonoran Desert on a summer morning. Rain or no rain, who wouldn't want in?

The lake, created in the late 1960s when local owners dammed Sonoita Creek, became part of the Arizona State Parks system in 1975. The setting can make you sigh, a striking azure blue lake cupped by rolling foothills and stretches of mountains. To the north, the peaks of Mount Wrightson and Mount Hopkins cut into the sky while the Santa Cruz River marks the west.

This park offers something for almost everyone. Boaters haul in their crafts either revved on gasoline or paddle-powered. Birders make the trip for a look at a long list of feathered residents. Other visitors, the ones who tend to look down rather than up, have their eyes set on the lake's supply of catfish, bluegill, bass, crappie and, in the winter and spring months, trout.

[BELOW] A pedestrian bridge arches across the lagoon at Patagonia Lake in southern Arizona, and offers visitors a chance to view the popular fishing and boating areas.

"They'll pull out a catfish that weighs 50 pounds," reports park manager David Pawlik.

"Is that good?" the uninitiated might be tempted to ask.

"That's real good," says Pawlik.

Pawlik and the other rangers have the job of keeping the park safe, clean and operating smoothly. A weekday in summer gives the visitor an idyllic view of the results. Children, their parents and their dogs wade near the shore. Other children play on a pier, while a boy shows his prowess with an old-fashioned cannonball dive. Three young men pass in a small boat with a red, white and blue sail. Three young women paddle by in a canoe. The artist Norman Rockwell would have loved this place.

But, come a summer weekend and it's "Katy, bar the gate." More than a thousand people may make the trip down State Route 82 and up the 4-mile road to the gate on a Saturday or Sunday. Many are day-trippers, here for a family picnic and a few hours on the park's beach, but others come for the 78 campsites and additional 34 sites with hookups. The lake has 13 boat-accessible campsites. Sometimes the rangers meet them on the road with bad news.

"That's the worst part, telling these people that we don't have any more spots," says Pawlik.

Concessions have been made to keep an element of serenity in the park, even on the crowded days. A "no-wake" restriction limits boats to speeds of 5 mph or less on the eastern half of the lake. On the motorized portion of the lake, jet skiing, waterskiing and towing recreational devices are prohibited on weekends and holidays, May through September. These rules help keep the peace and quiet.

On a Saturday morning trip to the east end of the lake, you can see cormorants contentedly floating and diving while a green heron flies low over the water. Some of the plumes on the other side of the lake are man-made, great arches of water flying out behind the fast-moving boats.

"It's a park of extremes," says Ranger Steve Haas of the use, the clientele and the natural aspects of the lake. He points to the Deep Cove area with its north- and south-facing slopes divided only by 100 feet of water but showing two sides of nature. On the south-facing slope, the desert flourishes with cacti and ocotillos. On the north-facing slope, you see a hint of forest — trees and shrubs requiring less sun. Here deer and bobcats may linger in the brush. Around both the eastern and western edges of the lake, cattle from a nearby ranch graze.

[ABOVE] Desert fishermen hope to catch bass or crappie, two of several fish species that dart and dodge in the lake's creek-fed waters. [RIGHT] Even the turkey vultures want to have fun. Here they scan the ground for breakfast while catching a few rays on top of a lakeside picnic area ramada.

In 1994 the park system added to the

[ABOVE] The serenity and quiet of Patagonia Lake's boat dock holds the promise of adventure on the water.

extremes. The state purchased 5,000 adjoining acres to form the Sonoita Creek State Natural Area. Trails and facilities are now being developed with a hoped-for completion date in 2004. The area includes a riparian forest, paths meandering between rock walls, through shady thickets of mesquite and cottonwoods. To preserve the wild nature of the land and the solitude it offers, use will be nonmotorized. You can walk in, bike in or bring the horse, leaving the machinery of the modern world behind.

"It's nature," says Haas, unit manager for the natural area. "We aren't the top dogs all the time."

Back at the lake, the spirit of a small town reigns. Tents go up within a few feet of the water. People set up their grills and tables and sign on for lake and birding tours offered through the Natural Area Visitor Center. They walk or drive to the two stores, one for general camping needs, the other at the marina, where those who practice the art of rod and reel can buy their bait and tell their tales.

"Snagged a 4-pounder," says one fellow of the bass who fell for the magic of his lure. Over at the campsites, another man claims his night fishing brought in a bass weighing 11 pounds. Out on a pier, a boy, still catch-free, says he's looking for "any kind" of fish.

"I like the wintertime because it slows down," muses Ranger Pawlik on a summer morning at the Patagonia park. But, when the heat rolls over the southern Arizona desert, broken only by a hard, quick rain, a lake tempts like the best fishing lure ever invented. Reel us in, brother, just reel us in. AH

LOCATION: Approximately 90 miles south of Tucson.

GETTING THERE: Take Interstate 10 and drive southeast of Tucson to State Route 83, heading south. At Sonoita, go west on State 82, 7 miles past Patagonia to park entrance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: (520) 287-6965; www.pr.state.az.us/parksites.html.

THINGS TO DO IN PATAGONIA

This small town has a handful of shops and eating places, all located on or near the main street. Anyplace you go you will meet friendly Patagonia residents. So, if you can't find a place or want a suggestion, just ask.

GATHERING GROUNDS Want to start your visit to Patagonia with gourmet coffee and a homemade pastry? Stop by this cafe and join the locals. Hearty sandwiches mark the noon hour here, and dinners on Fridays earn gold stars, (520) 394-2097.

MARIPOSA BOOKS & MORE Books, art and gifts line the walls and shelves of this store. This is also the home of the Patagonia Visitor Center. Chat awhile with shop owner Ann Caston. She knows her town and her books, (520) 394-9186.

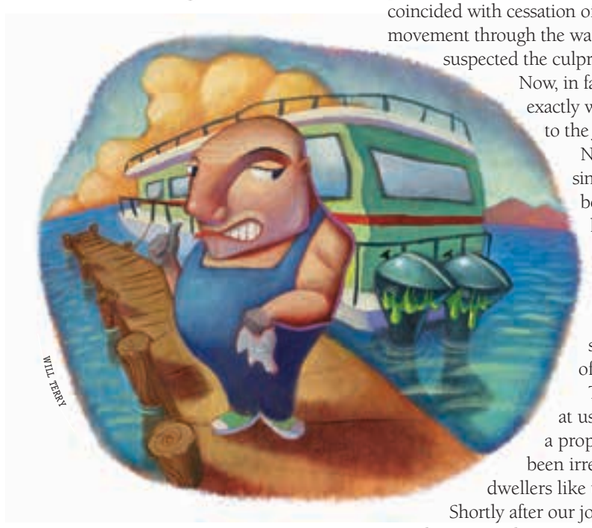
ARIZONA VINEYARD WINERY For a free taste of Arizona wine, head south on State Route 82, past Patagonia Lake State Park, to the Arizona Vineyard Winery. Here you can sip on White Burgundy, Golden Arizona Sauterne or Tino Tinto, just some of the wines from this part of the state, (520) 287-7972.

WAGON WHEEL SALOON & RESTAURANT Remember, partner, you're in cattle country. This casual restaurant offers a menu to match, serving up steaks and hamburgers along with a list of other lunch sandwiches and evening entrees, (520) 394-2433.

PATAGONIA-SONOITA CREEK PRESERVE This internationally known destination for bird-watchers encompasses some of the richest remaining riparian habitats in the area. Visitors see an array of diverse species of endangered fish, birds and butterflies, (520) 394-2400.

by BILL NORMAN

His Ailing HOUSEBOAT Has Bad 'ALLERGIES' — the Green, Slimy Kind



"HERE'S YER PROBLEM," SAID THE PEAR-SHAPED man in the skillet-fried overalls. Gesturing with a large, darkly lubricated thumb at one of our houseboat's two ailing outboard motors, he diagnosed: "Yer got allergy in yer intakes. Hmmm . . . for you boys, five thousand oughta make 'em good as newd."

Whoa. There it was — in mechanic talk — awful, green, slimy algae. My three houseboat partners and I had heard muffled explosions that coincided with cessation of our boat's forward movement through the water, but we'd never suspected the culprit might be allergy.

Now, in fact, an allergy was exactly what I was developing to the *Javelina Jilton.*

Not for the first time since four of us had bought our used houseboat, I wished the wretched thing would emit a few final burbles and do a *Titanic* beneath several hundred feet of Apache Lake.

The sales pitch aimed at us by the guy sporting a propeller-shaped tie had been irresistible to desert dwellers like us.

Shortly after our joyous lake-ensconced purchase, my phone rang at 6 A.M. From the shower, I heard three shorts, three longs, three more shorts. On shampoo-slick feet, I skidded outward in time to hear the disembodied voice on the other end of the phone at Apache Lake marina mutter, "Yer, uh, boat is sinking!"

Well, of course it wasn't. The unspeakable thing was simply taking on water and settling back on its leaky pontoons. Had I not been neophyte-frantic, I would — as a seasoned Arizona used-houseboat-owner would do by instinct — have idly, subvocally, inquired, "Er, how do you know it's sinking?" Or merely bellowed, "You obviously have the wrong number!" Then I would have hung up and broken into wild guffaws while calling the insurance agent.

Enthusiasm waning, I kept a special ship's log of our adventures: Replace ($5,000 apiece) engines; replace (38-foot) throttle cables; replace (38-foot) steering cables. Have fun for two months. Replace gas tanks, replace roof, replace deck. Fix stupid control valve thing on chemical toilet, again. Have fun for one and a half months. Plug all mysterious holes in aluminum pontoons. Kick stupid recalcitrant propane refrigerator, hoping for some semblance of chill.

One of my partners sought to reassure me: "Hey! We have a stove, a refrigerator and a potty in a floating hotel on a lake in the middle of the desert. We have a machine that makes music and another that emits gusts of chilled air. We sleep in real beds and dine on a table instead of a rock. Whaddya want, fer cripes sake?!"

Perhaps I was being overly critical.

Memories of the good times flooded back to me. I recalled anchoring the big beast in a secluded cove as a crimson sunset washed down the jagged southern flanks of the Four Peaks Wilderness. I'd dived off the fantail for a luxurious dip in the lake at dusk in July. My fiancee and I had moved sleeping pads up to topside where we could pick up a breeze, lie back and scan the stars on parade in heavens not murked up by city lights.

Of course, the very next day, our engine tachometers ceased registering, a disturbing aroma of propane lingered near the stovetop burners, and the little 12-volt pump from which we (sometimes) derived water for sinks and showers began making *pfft-pfft* noises. Our sole radio reception came via signal-skip off the ionosphere from a 50-watt agricultural advice station in Rangoon.

That's not the boat in my dreams, of course. Back at home, deep in sleep, I'm transported once again to paradise. The lake by early morning is glass-smooth; two bighorn sheep are cruisin' against the sky on highest rocky ridgelines; coffee's on; and somebody's got spuds and onions sliced and sizzlin' over the stove.

I take a long running dive off the stern into summer blue waters, go deep, then surface and grab first streaks of daylight on my face. I push my hair up and out of my eyes; I lean back and float for a few moments; then roll over and go into a slow breast stroke back toward the luxury home on pontoons and breakfast . . .

And then, inevitably to spoil it all, dimly through shrouds of slumber, I hear the phone. Three shorts . . . three longs . . . Huh? Ramming my head under the pillow, I elect to stay with the dream version of reality. AH

by PETER ALESHIRE / photographs by ROBERT G. McDONALD

The Bill Williams LOOP ROAD Tracks Forest Scenery the MOUNTAIN MAN Would Have EXPLORED With GUSTO

A SUMMER ESCAPE TO THE MEANDERING BACK road leading to the 9,256-foot heights of Bill Williams Mountain may not require the hardship and threats that made mountain-man Bill Williams such a strange character, but it does offer a soothing escape from the swelter of a desert summer.

The Bill Williams Loop Road starts at Exit 157 off Interstate 40 just west of the town of Williams, offering a forested drive around the base of a 4-million-year-old volcano.

A sleepy railway town 32 miles west of Flagstaff along the old transcontinental U.S. Route 66, Williams brags on being the "Gateway to the Grand Canyon," owing to a tourist railway that trundles visitors to the Canyon some 55 miles north. Surrounded by the Kaibab National Forest and nestled in the shadow of the mountain, the town boasts nearly 3,000 residents, 1,400 hotel rooms, a historic downtown and a cozy collection of cafes and restaurants, scattered down a main street right out of the 1940s.

During the summer tourist season, Williams plays to its heritage with staged gunfights, a Civil War brass band, the nostalgic puffing of the steam-driven Grand Canyon Railway and gatherings of classic cars and Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

The town stages a springtime Old West-style mountain-man rendezvous to celebrate its vivid, fearless and extravagantly peculiar namesake — trapper, preacher and trailblazer Bill Williams — "Old Solitaire," also dubbed "the greatest fur trapper of them all."

The North Carolina-born Williams was a wandering preacher before he headed west in the 1820s. The quest for souls to salvage led him to the West, where he did missionary work among the Osage Indians in Missouri, then took an Osage wife and converted to the tribal ways. After his wife died, he lurched off into the wilderness.

Tall, red-haired, bony and indefatigable, Williams spent decades wandering alone. He learned many Indian languages, which he rendered in his garrulous, high-pitched, reedy voice. He earned an outsized reputation for his survival skills, marksmanship and the epic, drunken sprees that marked his sporadic returns to civilization. When he sobered up, he could run all day with six beaver traps slung over his shoulder, to take advantage of the peculiar European obsession with beaver-skin top hats.

Williams won many hundred-dollar bets on his peculiar shooting style, in which he let the muzzle of his heavy, long-barreled "Kicking Betsy" wander about until the front sight crossed the target, whereupon he squeezed off a shot.

George Frederick Ruxton, the English travel writer of the Far West in the 1940s, observed that Williams rode with his stirrups cinched up so high he crouched in the saddle, hunched over the saddle horn with his rifle sticking out to either side, peering about with his piercing gray eyes in his battered felt hat and buckskins.

"The old coon's face was sharp and thin, a long nose and chin hob-nobbing each other," wrote Ruxton, "and his head was always bent forward, giving him the appearance of being hump-backed. He appeared to look neither to the right nor left, but in fact, his little twinkling eye was everywhere."

Williams' legendary luck and instincts finally ran out in 1849, when Ute Indians ambushed the pack train he was shepherding through Colorado for Dr. Ben Kern, killing both Kern and Williams. Kern's brother was later traveling with a surveying expedition through Arizona and attached Williams' name to both the mountain and to the Bill Williams River, which feeds into the Colorado River.

Although the wilderness Williams loved has

[ABOVE] Atop Bill Williams Mountain in north-central Arizona, a '68 Ford Bronco with 500,000 hard miles and its driver reflect the rugged spirit of the legendary trapper after whom the peak was named.
[RIGHT] Forest Service Road 111 curves through the pines on Bill Williams Mountain while Mingus Mountain rises in the haze 34 miles to the south.

[LEFT] At 9,256 feet, Bill Williams Mountain's summit provides a site for numerous radio and microwave towers as well as a historic lookout tower built in 1937.
[RIGHT] Dubbed by Spanish explorers *yerba de chivato* ("herb of the he-goat") for its goatlike fragrance, tailleaf pericome flourishes along FR 111's roadside embankment.

yielded to scattered towns, ranches and a network of dirt roads, you can still feel like you've escaped civilization on the well-graded, well-signed Williams Loop Road, Forest Service Road 108, surfaced with cinders from copious volcanic upheavals.

Williams Loop Road winds through thick forests and scattered meadows as it circles the mountain made of silica-rich lava flows that oozed and blasted out of a cluster of tubelike spires. Repeated eruptions gradually built the mountain's imposing mass before the center of volcanic activity shifted to the east. The region remained active as recently as a thousand years ago, when outbreaks left the cinder cones at Sunset Crater northeast of Flagstaff.

The road runs past a scattering of alluring campsites, many on the edge of large meadows where underlying limestone layers poke through the overlay of volcanic rock. Water soaks more quickly through the limestone soil into networks of fissures and caverns.

After about 17 miles, the Loop Road runs past marshy Coleman Lake. Although the lake all but dries up for much of the year, the rare wetlands attract cinnamon teals, ruddy ducks, buffleheads, grebes, ring-necked ducks and pintails. Two miles farther, the Loop Road comes up against County Road 73, marked Forest Road 173 on some maps. The turn to the north onto CR 73 leads back 5 miles toward Williams and I-40. About 1 mile north of the junction of the Loop Road and CR 73, you pass Twin Springs Road, which cuts back to the west where it reconnects to the Loop Road after 6 miles. To get to the road that goes to the top of the mountain, continue north on 73 to 111—a narrow, well-graded road that heads west and climbs some 1,800 feet in about 7 miles to the peak.

The road wanders up the mountain through scrubby oak, juniper and pine trees at its base to a stately forest of yellow-trunked, vanilla-scented ponderosa pines, and then on up to the dark, bristling Douglas firs. The road makes hairpin switchbacks, yielding increasingly more rousing views of the misty distance.

The peak bristles with microwave and radio towers, plus a lonely platform for a Forest Service firewatcher. Finger Rock, a toothy line of jagged rocks made of fused volcanic ash, is set into the jaw of a narrow ridge just below the peak, near where foot- and mountain-bike trails hit the top of the mountain. A short scramble over an intermittent trail takes the adventurous to an altar of 4-million-year-old lichen-mottled stone with a breathtaking view.

Sitting there you can dimly imagine the wanderings of Old Solitaire and comprehend the sense of joy and adventure that drove him across this wild landscape—stretching still to the mysterious folds of the horizon. AH

travel tips

WARNING: Back road travel can be hazardous if you are not prepared for the unexpected. Whether traveling in the desert or in the high country, be aware of weather and road conditions, and make sure you and your vehicle are in top shape. Carry plenty of water. Don't travel alone, and let someone at home know where you are going and when you plan to return. Odometer readings in the story may vary by vehicle.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Kaibab National Forest, Williams Ranger District, (928) 635-5600; City of Williams Visitor Center, (928) 635-4707.

experience arizona

Festivals, powwows and get-togethers / by CARRIE M. MINER

CHACO CANYON/JERRY SIEVE

Travel Back in Time to the Homelands of the Ancestral Puebloans

photo workshop

Follow in the footsteps of the ancient people on a photography tour to a world where cliff dwellings and crumbling pueblos bear witness to a complex Indian culture. Our exciting adventure begins in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, where towering multistoried masonry structures attest that this area was once the trading and cultural hub of the Four Corners region.

From Chaco we will head to Ute Mountain Tribal Park in Colorado, where we'll get a private tour of cliff palaces. A tour of Arizona's spectacular Canyon de Chelly and its ancient ruins completes the workshop.

Come explore the remote and spectacular remains of a bygone age **September 21-27, 2003.**

For more information or a free workshop brochure, contact **Friends of *Arizona Highways*** at (602) 712-2004, toll-free at (888) 790-7042, or visit their Web site at www.friendsofazhighways.com.

Other Photography Workshops

September 23-27 & October 23-27
Enter the twisting, colorful corridors of Arizona's slot canyons, guided either by former *Arizona Highways* Picture Editor J. Peter Mortimer or current Photography Editor Richard Maack.

October 2-5
Stunning vistas await you at the Grand Canyon's Toroweap campground, where photographer Jerry Sieve will show you how to make the utmost out of your perch high above the Colorado River.

October 30 – November 3
Join photojournalist Jeff Kida to photograph the friendly inhabitants and festive colors of northern Mexico's distinctive Day of the Dead ceremonies.

Some Like it Hot

June 14; Flagstaff

Chili may have originated with the Incas, Aztecs and Mayan Indians who cultivated chili peppers and knew how to spice up a dish long before the Spanish conquistadores stumbled upon the Americas in the 15th century. But it wasn't until cowboy cooks utilized the simple concoction of meat, peppers and spices as a staple meal on cattle drives that chili grew in popularity as one of the Southwest's favorite dishes. One legend even claims that Frank and Jesse James spared the bank in the town where their favorite chili parlor was located.

Cooks dole out some of the best red and green chili in the Southwest in the world championship-qualifying **Route 66 Regional Chili Cook-off**. Other activities include a salsa contest, live entertainment and crafts. Information: (928) 526-4314.

Dance Feats

June 9-July 30; Holbrook

Native Americans dance to bring down the rain, to find strength in war and to honor the Holy People. This cultural cornerstone communicates across generations the stories of the world through song and dance. Dances range from the serious to social and create harmony within the people who perform them.

Indians perform authentic dances such as the popular hoop dance in Historic Courthouse Square Monday through Friday from 6:30 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. at the annual **Native American Dances**. Information: (928) 524-6558 or toll-free, (800) 524-2459.

A View From the Mountains

June 28-September 1; Wickenburg

Searching for vignettes of Arizona, photographer Michael Collier and author Rose Houk engaged in explorations spanning two years, 30,000 miles and 10 of the state's mountain ranges. The result: *The Mountains Know Arizona: Images of the Land and Stories of Its People*, an *Arizona Highways* book. Collier summarizes his work with 75 photographs he calls **"A View From the Mountains"** that will be exhibited at Desert Caballeros Western Museum. "Photography, more than any other endeavor I can imagine, connects my body and soul to a landscape," Collier declares. Information: (928) 684-2272.

MICHAEL COLLIER

Michael Collier's photographs from *The Mountains Know Arizona* will be exhibited at Desert Caballeros Western Museum.

Folk Roots

June 7-8; Prescott

Evidence of quilting exists so far back in history that there is no telling exactly where or when it began. But, as early American settlers created quilts to suit their needs, the utilitarian skill evolved into an art form. Quilting and other traditional pioneer arts such as woodcarving, spinning, weaving and candle-making take on a new appeal in demonstrations at the **30th Annual Folk Arts Fair** at the Sharlot Hall Museum. Information: (928) 445-3122.

Other Events

Ladybug Elevation Celebration; June 1-30; Tucson; Mount Lemmon Ski Valley; (520) 576-1321. See ladybugs emerge from hibernation.

Old West Days and Bucket of Blood Races; June 6-7; Holbrook; (928) 524-6558 or toll-free (800) 524-2459. Car show, arts and crafts, foot and bike races, fun run and live entertainment.

Native American Music Festival; June 7; Tsaile; (928) 724-6741. Live entertainment and an outdoor Indian market at Diné College.

Sacred Mountain Prayer Run; June 7; Flagstaff; (928) 526-2968. A 10K race and fun runs at the base of the San Francisco Peaks.

National Trails Day Celebration; June 7; Pinetop-Lakeside; (928) 368-6700. Guided hikes, bike treks and horseback riding trips along the White Mountain Trail System.

Heard Museum Film Festival; June 19-22; Phoenix; (602) 251-0284. Indigenous films and film-related workshops and lectures.

Spring Plant Sale and Garden Fair; June 21; Flagstaff; (928) 774-1442. Garden- and nature-related activities at The Arboretum at Flagstaff.

Prescott Valley Days; June 25-28; Prescott Valley; (928) 772-8857. Parade, carnival, live entertainment and kids' activities.

Note: Dates and activities could change. Before planning to attend events, phone for fees and to confirm days and times.

gene perrel's witshop

Conspiratorial Boy Scout FOOD SMUGGLERS Learn a Life Lesson the SOGGY WAY

RICK BURRESS

In the book *Growing Older is So Much Fun EVERYBODY'S Doing It*, author Gene Perret says, "I did some dumb things when I was young, but I don't do them anymore. I don't have to. There're enough young people around doing them for me." To order this book ($6.95 plus shipping and handling) or other Perret humor books, call toll-free (800) 543-5432. In Phoenix, call (602) 712-2000. Or use arizonahighways.com.

THIS IS A TRICK QUESTION: WHERE WOULD you go to see the London Bridge? You wouldn't go to London; you'd go to Lake Havasu on the western edge of Arizona. Robert McCulloch transplanted the famous bridge that was falling apart in London and had it rebuilt over the Colorado River.

It wasn't an easy task. McCulloch paid $2.5 million for the bridge, and it's never easy to pay a couple of million bucks for anything that's falling down. He paid more than double that to have the 10,276 granite blocks shipped into Long Beach, California, then trucked up to Lake Havasu and reformed into the bridge.

It transformed a pedestrian desert community into a tourist attraction and was a brilliant entrepreneurial coup.

My brother and I were once involved in an importing endeavor. It wasn't so clever or so costly. I also should confess that it wasn't too commendable, either.

It happened when we were both Boy Scouts off on a month-long summer camping excursion. A Scout is required by the Boy Scout Law to be "trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent." At this particular camp, the Scout was on his own for 11 of those requirements, but the "brave" stipulation was satisfied just by showing up at the mess hall for meals. You didn't have to eat anything — just being there when the food was served was enough.

You see, the cook at this camp was a gruff, unlikable clod. (Of course, if you had to spend three periods a day around boisterous, exuberant, smart-alecky boys, would you be ungruff?) The cook was not in Scouting. He didn't have to be "trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean or reverent." And he wasn't, and that was okay by us kids. His one unforgivable sin was that he couldn't cook worth a hoot. He didn't know ratatouille from raisin bread, and if he prepared them, no one else could tell the difference either.

We all called this guy "Cookie," which was a terrible misnomer. It would be like calling Ebenezer Scrooge "Smiley." Cookie should not have been nicknamed anything that had the word "cook" in it. There was a story that circulated around the camp — it was most likely apocryphal, but we all believed it anyway — that a fire once broke out in the camp kitchen. The local volunteer firemen put it out quickly, but six of them had to be treated for food inhalation.

Consequently, at this camp, besides being trustworthy, loyal and the rest, each Boy Scout was also . . . hungry. That's why my brother and I acted like Robert McCulloch and conspired to import food into our camp — edible food.

We enlisted our parents, quite without their knowledge, into our Scout smuggling scheme.

"Please, Mom and Dad, when you come for visiting day, bring us a whole bunch of hoagies." Mom and Dad knew that hoagies (which are like submarine sandwiches, grinders, po-boys) were our favorite food. They didn't know that any outside foodstuffs in camp was prohibited. We quickly greeted them on visiting day and hid the illegal delicacies.

We stored them in a cooler until we were to go on our overnight hike. Our accomplices all carried some of my brother's camping gear in their knapsacks. That left my brother's backpack free to carry the booty.

The following morning, my brother left with the first group of hikers, and I followed in the second group about an hour later. It was a strenuous hike, through the forest and along the river, to our overnight camping site. The exertion was made more endurable, though, by the mouth-watering thought that by evening we'd be dining on hoagies.

Then as I struggled over the rocks next to the river, I looked down and saw a slice of tomato in the water. Then I noticed some onion slices, a few chunks of lettuce, pieces of lunchmeat and cheese. Then I saw huge slices of bread rushing downstream, swollen to three times their size by the absorbed water.

My brother, his knapsack and the glorious, tasty sandwiches had all fallen into the river together. That night we dined on soggy biscuits made with flour and water, wrapped in tinfoil and baked in the hot coals of our campfire. We sang no happy songs around that campfire because we weren't happy, and it's hard to sing when you're trying to chew and swallow biscuits like we made.

The moral of this Scouting tale is that a Scout should always be true to the Scout Law. And a secondary moral of the story is that if my brother and I had been in charge of the relocation of the London Bridge, it would be floating somewhere down the Colorado River now instead of spanning it. AH

hike of the month

by CHRISTINE MAXA / photographs by JERRY SIEVE

KEVIN KIBSEY

BEARS and a RAINSTORM Add Excitement to LOWER FISH CREEK TRAIL in the White Mountains

I HAD NO IDEA I WASN'T ALONE. My visitor didn't seem to notice me, either. For a few minutes, we were just two creatures sharing the same space along the Lower Fish Creek Trail in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests in eastern Arizona's White Mountains. Crouched down and engrossed in taking a picture of a yellow-eyed grass flower, I didn't notice the black bear grubbing just 20 feet away.

When I saw it, I quickly clapped my hands to shoo it away. The bear looked up and ran into the woods. Then it stopped. With 50 yards between us, the bear perched its front paws on a log and stared at me.

"Go on," I said to the curious bruin. The bear didn't move a bit.

"Go," I ordered, then threw a rock. The bear turned and continued deeper into the woods.

By the time I reached the trail's junction with Fish Creek at mile 0.6, I knew I was in for a wild time on this remote trail, almost a dozen back-road miles from Hannagan Meadow on U.S. Route 191. Freshly imprinted tracks from another bear going my way convinced me.

The bear tracks led the way as I traveled west on the trail along Fish Creek.

The Lower Fish Creek Trail follows the perennial flow of Fish Creek all the way to the Black River. Cradled in a cozy wooded canyon that opens up several times to accommodate meadows of wildflowers, the path delves into the wilderness. The steel-gray walls of the canyon, with their strange spires and hoodoos, add to an untamed feeling.

The trail makes a gradual descent to the river, and aspen and conifer trees turn to oaks and ponderosa pines by the second mile. That's when I noticed the bear tracks had disappeared. But the remoteness never did. It just got more intense as the trail went deeper into the canyon.

By mile 3.5, where a strong aroma of onions wafts from colonies of nodding onion flowers, the forest changes. Trees, inexplicably yanked from the ground or snapped at their trunks, lie on the slopes. The Forest Service guesses a tornado ripped through the area. The desolation can provoke a twinge of paranoia if rain clouds skulk around like they did on my hike.

I knew I was in for it when the canyon turned a bend and a roiling thunderhead was revealed. The rain started as I reached an old cowboy camp in a ponderosa pine tree park at mile 4.4. Daggers of lightning jabbed the air all around me, thunder exploded above me and ice cube-sized hail pelted me. I took to crouching again — this time for protection — at the canyon's lowest point on the banks of the creek with my jacket tented over my head.

The storm passed and left me unscathed. But I felt a pair of eyes on my back the whole time — felt them so strongly that I twice turned to see who, or what, was there.

The last mile of the trail rises into a mixed conifer forest just past the cowboy camp. On a cloudy day, the forest gets dark and disquieting. A few snaps from tree limbs and clumsy clunks of elk hooves dashed against downed logs can give a weather-weary hiker a jolt.

The trail ends at its confluence with the Black River. On a sunny day, the swift-flowing water sparkles like a neon marquee. After a rain, mist swirls around the craggy cliffs so thickly, it hides the river.

I never saw the river because of the moody mist. I never saw the second bear, nor the elk. Neither did I find out what watched me at the cowboy camp. The Lower Fish Creek Trail can make one wild, mysterious hike. AH

[ABOVE AND OPPOSITE PAGE] Continual moisture along Fish Creek in eastern Arizona encourages the growth of water-loving wildflowers and plants.

For families, novices and experts, *Arizona Hiking: Urban Trails, Easy Paths & Overnight Treks* features a trail mix ranging from urban-area preserves to the Grand Canyon. The book brims with how-to and where-to-go information on more than 70 hikes, plus 120 color photos. To order ($16.95 plus shipping and handling), call (800) 543-5432. Or use arizonahighways.com.

LOCATION: Approximately 280 miles east of Phoenix by way of Springerville.
GETTING THERE: From Hannagan Meadow, drive .1 mile north on U.S. Route 191 to Forest Service Road 576 and turn left. Drive about 4 miles west to FR 24 and turn right. After about 1 mile, bear left onto 24/83. Drive about 5 miles to 83A and turn left. Travel 1.3 miles and turn left again onto the signed road to the trailhead. Drive .4 mile to the trailhead. A high-clearance vehicle is necessary.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, Alpine Ranger District, (928) 339-4384.

Before you go on this hike, visit our Web site at arizonahighways.com for other things to do and places to see in the area.